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Confessions of a Poet



F. HARALD WILLIAMS





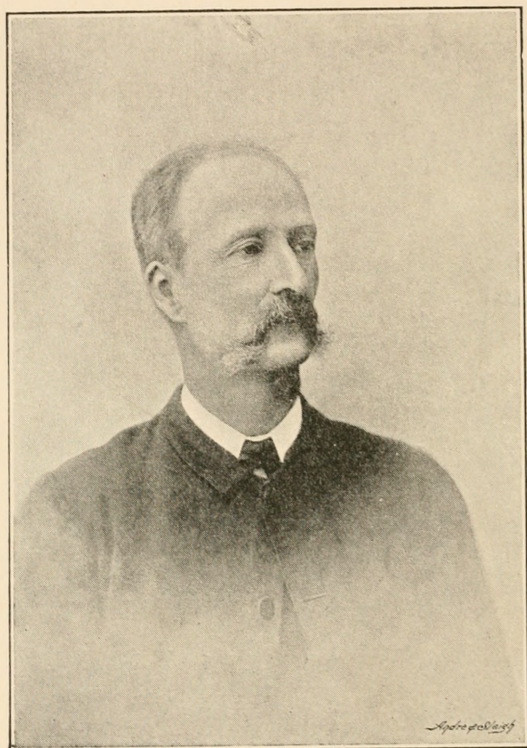


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CONFESSIONS OF A POET.

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*Yours ever
F. Harold Williams*

Williams, F W O

Confessions of a Poet

BY

F. HARALD WILLIAMS, *pseud.*

AUTHOR OF "WOMEN MUST WEEP," "TWIXT KISS AND LIP"
ETC., ETC.

London

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P R E F A C E.

IN a certain sense the following verses are posthumous. That is to say, I was supposed to have died three years ago. But I have committed the indiscretion of coming to life again, like the old man in the story. He was pronounced defunct by his doctor, but persisted in reviving and asserting his right to existence, though his indignant wife exclaimed : " Hold your tongue, you old fool, the doctor must know best ". But, while unquestionably alive, I am buried in the obscurity of an enforced retirement. And, being completely cut off from the stream of the busy working world, I feel the necessity of connecting myself with it by the frail link of another book. My first venture, *Women Must Weep*, was for poetry a success. My second book, *'Twixt Kiss and Lip*, was a failure, partly perhaps because of its encyclopædic bulk, which quite exasperated some reviewers, though it contained the labours of twenty-five years. My third and present venture embodies the thoughts and feelings of three or four years, during which time I have done little beyond reading and writing. To the title, at any rate, no exception can be taken. Though the name of my second book was a sore offence to a brilliant Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who assured me solemnly that he dared not enter a respectable bookseller's shop and ask for a volume with such an improper name. Well, *sunt lacrymæ rerum* ; and I am sorry if I have done anything indecorous.

Mrs. Grundy must be respected. But I wonder how my squeamish friend passed unsoiled through such an ordeal as that presented by improper nouns and irregular verbs in the triumphant course of his educational career. However, the objection to a title is of small consequence. It is the dishonest criticism—misquotations and perversions of fact—which all authors must feel acutely, if they do not resent them. Reviewers in prominent journals are not ashamed to garble and misrepresent lines and passages in order to snatch a temporary triumph or a desperate point. And then, of course, there is no redress; protests are useless. *Editores errare non possunt*. They shield the delinquencies of their young jackals, who must be smart at any price—even at the price of principle and truth. For a popular paper to be dull is the one unpardonable sin. But, when there is no dishonesty, the ordinary running reviewer lacks the leisure or the inclination to pronounce proper judgment. And it seems hardly fair, from any standground, to dismiss the labour of years in one contemptuous sentence. The work of criticism should be done well, or not done at all. Probably no masterpiece of genius has ever been produced that could not on some sides be covered with ridicule. Any fool can make fun of a kind and throw the mud or dirty missile. But it takes a wise man to criticise, and a patient man to criticise honestly. Few will give the trouble required. Editors should remember that there are numbers of leisured ladies and gentlemen who would do notices of books just to employ themselves. One or two reviewers are quite inadequate for any journal. And these at present are often as irresponsible as they are anonymous—for *quis judicabit ipsos judices*? It is true, perhaps, few contemporary estimates are final. Posterity will revise them with justice and without

mercy. The critics of any given time stand far too near that time to see its defects. The besetting sin of our day is mannerism, affectation, obtrusive self-consciousness. We have a great deal of art, and a very little of nature; and we want both in due proportions. The modern maxim is, *ars est revelare artem*, and *poëta fit non nascitur*. Even the Master himself, even Tennyson, is a sad offender herein, and has made the vice fashionable. And then most writers painfully stick to the old ruts and measures. But why, in the name of common-sense, wear or attempt to wear another man's clothes? This is suicide. The style is the man. My favourite stanza is in twelve lines, and this I have made very much my own. As a rule, for most purposes I find a longer stanza unwieldy, and a shorter one inadequate. My theory may be wrong. But I think every verse (not line) should be, where possible, a complete poem in itself, with a marked beginning and middle and end. Naturally, the common stanza of four lines cannot accomplish this, and I do not see myself that even eight lines generally suffice. Now and then, in rapid movement and elsewhere, when the subject appeared to require it, I have employed stanzas of twenty and even twenty-four lines—for instance, in my battle ballad, "How I won the Victoria Cross". But at present I can hardly discern the rhythmical advantage of alternating, as some do, iambic with trochaic lines; and the anapæstic measure needs a Tennyson. Personally, I prefer an irregular vehicle for most matters, where the soaring excur-siveness of the lyric can be mingled with the stately march of the epic, and (as Mr. J. A. Noble rightly asserts) the "meditativeness" of the sonnet. In my threnody on the death of the great Master, which several living poets have generously admired, I have exemplified this range of hand-

ling, and especially in my second section, "The Light of the Amethyst". I have no right to complain of adverse or unjust criticism, perhaps, as both of my preceding books have met with a kind reception on the whole. But how can competent critics differ as to the musical or unmusical character of poetry? A reviewer in the *Guardian* said of my book with the improper title: "Mere doggrel, *passing human scansion* and comprehension". A writer in *St. Stephen's Review* pointed out "*the accurate rhythm and almost perfect versification*". And Mr. E. J. Payne praised my "*extraordinary skill and felicity in versification*". There should not be two opinions on this point. And now I would humbly ask all my reviewers, before passing judgment on me, to read "The Light of the Amethyst" and "The Pilgrim of Eternity". If these fail to please them, I shall think the doctor was right and the old man wrong. And yet my "Babydom" and "Dreamland" at the end of the Fifth Section seem to me at least very much alive indeed. But then I may be prejudiced, of course. Though, if the verdict does go against me, I can still plead, *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*.

F. H. W.

March, 1894.

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SECTION I.
CONFESSIONS OF A POET.

CONFESSIONS OF A POET.

PROLOGUE.

To thee, my beautiful one boy,
 My light and joy,
I give this little lover's greeting
Of rhymes, like rosy kisses meeting
 And rosy lips,
 When welcome sips
Its honey from the moment fleeting,
 Before it slips;
To thee, my bright and only son,
 My very one,
I give this toy of my own making
 Just for thy breaking.
Ah, could I enter that gold mine
 Profound of thine—
That fairy fancy always raising
New palaces, that have the praising
 They shyly ask
 Behind a mask
Of careless pride, at each amazing
 Triumphant task;
Then I might paint such wonders' pose
 As even those
Built by thy hand, with summit solemn
 And court and column.

I

O bliss from musty toil to turn,
 And meekly learn
 Strange lessons of thy tender teaching,
 And parables that pass my reaching !
 Thy serious looks
 Are better books
 To me, than all the pompous preaching
 Of cloister nooks ;
 And o'er their manuscripts and wines,
 Our great divines
 Show not in wisest arts and ages
 Such precious pages.

For thee I would a season sing,
 My boy and king,
 If but to come, as thou confessing
 With wide grave eyes some small transgressing,
 With royal air
 That makes half fair
 The faults, and seeks with pardon blessing
 And fondled hair.

My boy, I own thy sceptred love
 Prevails above
 The error, and on me the sentence
 Falls, and repentance.

THE POET'S CONFESSION.

Within the Temple of God's awful Space,
 Those cloisters calm and dim,
 I seek and do not find the resting-place
 Which only is in Him.

But what it is and where I cannot guess,
 An infant lost and blind,
 Who feels some wafts of His great Loveliness
 Upon each wave and wind.

For everywhere He moves, and yet this heart
 May nowhere see the Sight

Which is revealed to babes, and souls apart
In solitudes of light.
I seem to walk on air, through pillared porch
And dreadful carven shade,
By serpent flames that lick my cheeks and scorch
The ghostly colonnade.
And now a vision mocks my hungering eyes
Where roses blushed and fell,
And then a rift of other bluer skies
In peace ineffable.
Ah, if I knew some snow-pure woman child
Appareled all in love,
She might lead somehow these dark footsteps wild
To the new earth above.
But still I wander on without a guide
Save thought's own scourging rod,
Through ocean, desert, mountain, hell, outside
The refuge that is God.
Although He is the breath wherewith I live,
Wherewith I loose and bind,
A burning fire that is not fugitive
Deep in my haunted mind.
With no true compass but my fevered breast,
Without one lamp or law,
I stumble forth a pilgrim of unrest
In uncompanioned awe.
But here I snatch the shadow of a flower,
And there a piercing thorn ;
Betwixt the sunshine and the thunder shower,
Hope withers before born.
I have no comrades but the stock and stone
Even in the roaring strife,
And no untravelled land were half so lone
As my most separate life.
My work is blighted all, because its whole
Is but a splintered thing,
Unmated and unwrap by gleam or goal,
And under Azrael's wing.

My hand is stained, and from my trembling lips
That moulded are to pray,
Instead of praise the malediction slips
And dogs my darkened way.
I am aware at times of a soft hand
And baby fingers white,
Laid on my brow that wears an inward brand,
As from the Infinite.
But still I seek the Unknown God, and scorn
The lie by traitors dinned,
And sigh with broken heart that waits the morn
For others, "*I have sinned*".

TO MY WIFE.

We have faced all kinds of weather,
Dear wife, in many lands,
And borne them all together
With wedded hearts and hands.
There was a time for kisses—
I feel their fragrance yet,
And then by bleak abysses
Our sunless pathway set.
There was a place for meetings
We never shall have more,
Save when we clasp in greetings
Upon the farther shore.
Together we picked posies
Just crimson from God's sight,
When all the earth was roses
And all the waters light.
We saw the tempest riven
By the red lightning's power,
And then the opening heaven
Burst into flame and flower.
We have sailed the tumbling ocean
And broader seas of life,

Bound by the same devotion
That steered us home through strife.
No voice but thine could rally
The purpose plunged in fears,
It murmurs musically
Through all my married years.
No eyes but thine can beacon
My heart to better things,
When doubts of darkness weaken
And jar the golden strings.
No other hand is sweetness
Like thine upon my brow,
Or gives the one completeness
That is all comfort now.
Together at the Fountain
We quench our daily thirst,
And thus descend the mountain
We climbed as comrades first.
And though long faithful duty
Has silvered thy fair head,
I see the same young beauty
I saw with morning shed.
And now whate'er the weather,
If ebb or flowing tide,
We will sail the seas together
On to the Other Side.
O if my heart has wandered
A moment from its track
Or fancies idly squandered,
It ever soon came back.
Betwixt the thorn and blossom
Uprose thy face of love,
And called me to thy bosom,
As flies the homing dove.
Its blush has left the clover,
Its glory left the hill,
But kisses are not over
And we go courting still.

THE LOST SOUL.

PART I.

It was not many years ago
 When I, a wild and wayward man,
 Yet with some sort of godlike plan,
Lost the best gift the Heavens bestow
On sinners as they stray below,
 With which my brightening life began ;
I lost it in an evil hour
 Beneath the gay and garish lamp,
 Amid a city's ceaseless tramp,
To one who in her glorious flower
Had sold her grace to Satan's power,
 Dark with his deadly beauty stamp.

And O the awful change that broke
 With its accursèd blinding art
 Into my sick and haunted heart,
And like a damnèd spirit spoke,
When I in empty state awoke
 To miss and mourn my better part !
And O the horror of the shade
 That shrouded weary earth and sky,
 And bade the ancient splendour fly
From blushing cloud and dewy blade,
That faith's one conquering moment made
 God's own great calm eternity !

Something, the vision and the dream,
 That murky midnight turned to day,
 And wrought of labour childhood's play,
And caught the more than mortal gleam
That consecrated stone and stream,
 Had now for ever passed away ;
The ken that heard the angels call,
 And the grand unseen forces grind
 New systems out of wave and wind

And build of love a living wall,
Was gone in gloom that buries all,
And left no ray of light behind.

I sought it fondly but in vain
With terrible sweet bitter tears
Of the stern task and sterile years,
On altar pyres of blessed pain,
And in the martyr's iron chain
That bound to burning stake of fears;
I sought it of diviner deeds,
And in the dim but hallowed soil
Of tender, true, unselfish toil,
That showed me in my brother's needs
Religion more than all the creeds
Lit with a lamp of holier oil.

I sought it in the busy life,
The fever and the fiery glow
Of all this outward ebb and flow
That fashions us with stormy strife,
And bared my bosom to the knife
Of every coward's cruel blow;
I sought it in the holy hush,
That in the loudest lot finds room
And waves the wanderer back from doom,
When passions in their crimson flush
Turned to some nobler channel rush
Into immortal sudden bloom.

I sought it in the builded line,
Where temples out of frost and flame
The architects of wisdom frame,
That truth in shapely forms may shine
And make this earthly dross Divine
And give the Secret Word a name;
I sought it in the thunderous maze
Of mighty thoughts that brood and plot,
When kingdoms in corruption rot,

To burst at last in lightning blaze
And guilty rulers blast and raze—
Alas, I sought and found it not.

For science told me all was vain,
And man but tangled in the mesh
Of frail and transitory flesh,
A little while to fret and strain,
To fall and rise and fall again,
And die and be recast afresh ;
And Progress could not spare a space
To give the spirit now its due,
And long had lost the saving clue
That once had everywhere a place,
And was of all the crowning grace,
And made the heavens so near and blue.

The chemist labelled man as dust,
And mingled with a whiff of gas
As fleeting as the summer grass,
In spite of lofty shoots like trust,
That withered at the first rude gust,
Whatever might be clime or class ;
We were but bubbles on a stream,
Now in the darkness doomed and sad,
And now a mocking moment glad
With laughter of some lying beam,
The future was a poet's dream,
A living soul none ever had.

Philosophers, with hoary faiths
Wrought on the ages' forge of mind
As fetters hammered out to bind
Those that outsped their early spathes,
Swore my best hopes were idle wraiths
And only could poor bigots blind ;
The soul was but a useful tool
For grasping priests, or pretty toy
To last an hour of empty joy,

And leave its dupe a cheated fool
With babblers in a dying school
That the next buffet would destroy.

And every culture seemed to say
That man was just a brittle bond
Of earth, and must to earth respond,
Though he might climb the starry way
And walk with God Himself and pray,
Or see a world of bliss beyond ;
And when the body turned to dust
There came an ending to the store
Of sacred love and solemn lore,
And monarch's crown and beggar's crust
Alike were into silence thrust—
Man was mere dust and nothing more.

But, though I cannot find it yet,
I see it hinted in the skies,
And dawn in children's wondering eyes,
Or tiny hands that feel and fret
For prizes which they may not get—
In brows with awful watching wise ;
And it was truly once my own
When I a purer pathway trod,
It gave its greenness to the sod
And peace on evening breezes blown,
A fearful blessing but unknown
That turned its sightless orbs to God.

Perhaps some day, I cannot tell,
It will come back with vanished love,
As to its ark the wandering dove,
Borne on some earth-effacing swell
Transforming all, ineffable,
With a new message from above ;
And from my prison I shall start
Into a freedom full and sweet,
And face to face that presence meet

Which though myself in God has part,
And makes Divine the humblest heart
And puts the world beneath its feet.

PART II.

It was not many years far back,
When in mad wilfulness of mood
And seeking some forbidden food,
I wandered from the sober track
To flowers that veiled abysses black,
And dropt the guiding holy rood ;
And thus I lost a jewel rare,
The pride and glory of my kind,
For grace that was a passing wind
And only brought a gilded care—
That like a robber stript me bare,
And left me homeless, deaf and blind.

I lost myself, I lost my way
And springs that watered the dim dearth
Or leprous blots on blooming earth,
And fire that kindled the dead clay ;
I could not look without and pray,
Nor look within and wait for birth ;
For all seemed blasted, and a blight
Lay heavy on the lurid lands,
Like the dull reek of smouldering brands—
It took the beauty from my sight,
It gave a mocking tone to right
And marred the promise of my hands.

Alas, I lost my soul, and none
Could tell me where its riches hid,
Where'er I went, whate'er I did,
Nor teach me if the ruin done
Might be repaired, and blessing won
Beneath my coffin's iron lid ;

But yet I hunted high and low
And wrestled with the adverse years,
I threw myself on bloody spears
Of thirsty bane and pressing blow,
Tost on the tempest ebb and flow
Of gray intolerable fears.

I sought it of the mighty deep,
That in its cradle rocked the globe
And round it spread a purple robe,
And somewhere might the secret keep
Among its waves that laugh and weep,
If one its treasure-house could probe ;
But though I searched its every store,
And glimpses caught of things to be
In the old murmur of the sea
Which gathers up the ages' lore,
The deep (as to vain quests before)
Made answer, " It is not in me."

I sought it of the solemn Powers
That keep guard over life and death,
To whom earth is a fleeting breath
And but a troubled moment ours,
Though God may walk amid the bowers
And commune with the sons of Heth ;
And life and death with single voice
Replied, " Lo, we have heard its fame,
We know the sweetness of its name
For those who make the better choice,
We see its footsteps and rejoice
But cannot guess its fount or frame."

I sought it of the rolling Space,
And in the corridors of Time
Where mirth and madness change and chime,
And in the silence found its trace
That vanished ere I marked the place,
And left the sadness more sublime ;

And all responded to my cry,
 " It is not in the pillared stone
 Nor in the star of orbit lone,
The lion hath not passed it by,
Its path the eagle may not fly,
 And none can tell its hidden throne."

I asked the depth, I asked the height,
 I asked the angel of the sun,
 Who must his daily journey run ;
I sought it of the dazzling light,
And in the womb of darkest night,
 But all the answer still was one :
" It is not there, it is not here,
 It is not in the miry way
 Where pilgrims stumble as they stray,
Though it is higher than the sphere
Which pours its beams on bosom sere,
 But where it dwells we cannot say ".

I sought it everywhere with pain,
 I could not purchase it for gold,
 For rubies it was never sold,
And merchants with it got no gain ;
But all my weary search was vain,
 To find the treasure in its hold ;
No mortal knew the costly price,
 Nor where the jewel might be found
 That had no earthly place or bound,
More precious than all pearls and spice,
And sweeter than all sacrifice,
 Though each had heard its blessed sound.

PART III.

Then, as my passion deepened down
 And heavier grew the ghastly load,
 While conscience stabbed me with its goad

And life put on its fiercest frown,
When Heaven denied the craved-for crown,
I met an Angel by the road ;
My pilgrim path was dim and wild,
And she put forth her holy hand
To pluck me as a burning brand
From woe that vanished as she smiled,—
That wonderful pure woman child,
Whose touch of love was a command.

She was not high, she was not low,
But she was delicate and fair,
Delicious as the evening air
That trembles in the sunset glow ;
And virtue from her seemed to flow,
And lift me up a starry stair ;
Oh, she renewed me as a gust
That plays about the cottage eaves,
And lisps a little in the leaves,
And sweeps away the noontide dust ;
Till in me sprang full-armed trust,
And harvest round me shone in sheaves.

I looked into her happy eyes
That answered mine like steadfast stars,
And, lo, the blackness and the scars
Were scattered, and new earth and skies
Awoke and left me calm and wise,
As backward clanged my prison bars ;
I listened to her beauteous tones,
That breathed of better nobler things
And stablished tender hopes as kings
Exalted to eternal thrones,
And out of fears like stubborn stones
Drew heavenly harps with golden strings.

Once more I saw the snowy gleam
On virgin peaks of promise fall,
And life as some enchanted hall

Threw wide its portals to each beam
That dropt from every passing dream,
And felt the miracle in all ;
I found myself, I found my soul
In finding her who sweetly trod
As treads the sunbeam on the sod ;
And now I hear the music roll,
And facing the same glorious goal
Divinely walk with her and God.

HOME SICKNESS.

I am sick of the soft madam
Who was never touched by toil,
And I seek a child of Adam
With the savour of the soil ;
Not a peg for pretty clothing
And the jewels that she buys,
While perhaps she pays for nothing
With her impudence and eyes ;
Not a thing of thorns and roses
Who can play a gilded part,
And is perfect in her poses—
If you just omit the heart.

I am sick of the grand lady
With her elegance and airs,
And repute a trifle shady
That will some day need repairs ;
Who would scorn to set a finger
To the fringe of any task,
And yet does with gladness linger
With pet sins behind her mask ;
And I want no sugared sweetness
That conceals a ghastly dearth,
But in careless incompleteness
A true daughter of the earth.

I am sick of painted woman
 With her fussing and her fads,
Who has little of her human
 Save the powder box and pads ;
Who despises all the anguish
 Of the starveling's bitter plea,
And prefers to lie and languish
 With her dainty toys and tea ;
A mere fool of every fashion—
 The last lunacy in jugs,
With a breast that knows no passion
 But for dirty tales and pugs.

I am sick of false society
 With its endless talk and tramp,
And I *will* have some variety
 If it bears the gutter stamp ;
From the dust we each have risen,
 And I often feel it burn
When I kick against this prison,
 And to dust we shall return ;
And the bread and butter misses
 Now for me possess no charms,
But I sigh for fresher kisses
 And in Nature's naked arms.

I am sick of studied paces
 On the staircase up and down,
And the over-youthful faces
 That would hide their age's frown ;
Heavy eyes that force a twinkle
 From the havoc still unhealed,
Through the crow's feet and the wrinkle
 Which decline to be concealed ;
Yes, I pine for franker motion
 And without the treadmill brand,
Blushing cheeks and pure devotion
 Of unfettered heart and hand.

I am sick of bows and backing
And the livery of slaves,
Who yet seek delight in blacking
Noble boots and helpless graves;
Pallid lips that mince or mumble
The stale stories ever told,
And the weary feet that stumble
The same circle as of old;
But I long for some sweet scandal,
And a romp of rustic ways,
With a waist that one can handle
And not be impaled on stays.

I am sick of mock repentance,
And the under-dressing doll
Who cannot go through one sentence
As correctly as poor Poll;
All the reverent show and shamming
Of the humbug with his lies,
Who returns from worship damning
His dear neighbours' souls and eyes;
Give me ripe and nude reality,
If it be a little coarse,
For the pink and white formality
That goes smiling to divorce.

I am sick of titled sinners,
Fair and forty and so tough,
And the endless round of dinners,
Where I never get enough;
The dull compliment or question
Which, alas! I know too well;
The champagne and indigestion
With its prophecies of hell;
Ah, I hate the prim hypocrisy
Veiled in simperings and lace,
And I sigh for rude democracy
With her broad and buxom grace.

A CHILD OF ADAM.

Give me a true child of Adam,
If a fickle fortune please,
One to be my own heart's ease,
Though a thorn to you, dear madam,
And for others framed to tease ;
Aye, to me a wilful treasure,
When it is her last new pleasure
To be somewhat cold and coy,
As if loving were a toy
For a maiden who has leisure
Just to pass an idle day,
And may then be thrown away.

Deck her not with paint and patches,
Nor with ancestors and purse
And a parson as a nurse,
Such a thing as fashion hatches
To be everybody's curse ;
Oh, I dread that monstrous chicken,
And her antics make me sicken,
When just hopping from her shell
She begins to crow and swell
And my tardy course to quicken ;
Strutting down the ages' track,
With the shell upon her back.

Let her be no heavenly creature
Too refined almost to live,
Such as prayers and penance give,
Without one kind human feature,
A mere fragrance fugitive ;
Let her be of common metal,
Half a rose and half a nettle,
Common as the rain and air,
And to sight and sunshine fair
Opening out each hungry petal ;
And if earthly be her love,
Yet a flame that points above.

Rob her not of honest blushes,
Colour that no art can lend,
Which in wild enchanting blend
Sunrise fires with sunset flushes,
To one bright and beauteous end ;
Rob her not of that full figure
For a starving custom's rigour,
Nor of hand adept at toil
Jewelled with its splendid soil,
True as hand upon the trigger—
All a soldier's keen to smite,
All a woman's warm and white.

Leave to her the young glad motion,
As of birdies in the spring,
When a breeze is on the wing
And they drink its magic potion,
Till they cannot choose but sing ;
Leave to her the larger paces
Of the old imperial races,
When the footstep still kept time
With the heart's own happy chime,
And from freedom learnt fresh graces,
Rich in glory, beyond chance
One with woods and waters' dance.

Robe her in the dress of Nature,
Dew and storm and laughing light,
And the stillness of the night,
Whence God's first grand legislature
Has not all yet taken flight ;
Robe her in the generous raiment,—
That forbids a sordid claimant
Who would bring unhallowed fire,
Deeming one may hold for hire
What abides unbought with payment—
In the charms, without pretence,
Of her naked innocence.

Crown her with the ocean's blessing—
 Liberty and breadth and power,
 And the scent of the wild flower
 Yielded to the sun's caressing,
 And the secret summit's dower;
 Crown her with that spirit glamour,
 Caught not from the sage's grammar
 With its wise and wondrous page,
 Granted not to gold or age
 Or great thrones and kingly clamour—
 With that sweet and subtle breath,
 Deeper than all life and death.

Let her be a plain true woman,
 And a modest maiden still,
 Knowing but above the ill,
 And in all things richly human
 Working out her own pure will;
 Let her be herself—no copy,
 Nor in trade shut up and shoppy,
 And though steadfast in her trust,
 Swayed by feeling's every gust,
 As the meadow's pride the poppy;
 Full of earth's most homely leaven,
 While she draws the air of heaven.

THE PESSIMIST.

"Sic omnia fatis
 In pejus ruere ac retro sublapsa referri."
 —*Virg. Georg.*, I. 200.

For æons man has lived to love,
 And tried each system as the glove
 He wears and casts away,
 And from the heart of black damnation
 His hand had plucked his own salvation
 But for the grim decay;

His passing soul would love to live,
Were not its fate so fugitive,
 A bubble or a breath,
And he a beggar at the portal
Which bids him knock for the immortal
 And opens unto death.

His purpose like a giant form
That wrestles with the dark and storm
 Arises in its might,
And from the grip of iron ages
Tears now and then those bloody pages
 Which are his only light ;
And here and there with wondrous plan
He may a trembling moment span
 The hell where serpents hiss,
And tossing arms and tortured faces
In waves of woe from burning spaces
 Surge up from the abyss.

Those porches paved with solid fire
In the great passion of desire
 His fearless feet have trod,
In search of truth and some foundation
And food to stay in blank starvation
 The hunger for his God ;
He never deemed the battle lost
Nor counted once the bitter cost
 In his unequal strife,
And struggled on the hopeless track
To find some refuge in the rack
 Of ruin misnamed Life.

Dim revelations to him came
In mocking masks of cloud and flame
 But brought no saving sight,
And on the souls of reverend sages
Lay through the dumb and dreary stages
 A horror of dead night ;

And yet he traversed sea and land
To build his faith on sinking sand,
And not the central rock,
He found the fairest tower was Babel
And each new heaven a foolish fable,
That bore no trial shock.

But still he fights the desperate fray,
Pent in his dying cage of clay,
Believing mist is morn,
And till it burst in scarlet blossom
He sings and presses yet his bosom
Upon the piercing thorn ;
And of the martyrs' blessèd bones
He makes and breaks his stepping stones
To triumph over ill,
And to the goal that comes not nigher
He shapes his shadowed pathway higher
That leads to nothing still.

He rolls through space his sightless orbs
In the great gulf that hope absorbs,
And never yields a spark ;
He feeds his faith on pastures bitter,
That lure him with their grave-like glitter,
Yet deeper in the dark ;
And in the mockery of his love
He bares his breast to wrath above,
Perched on his crumbling clod,
And arms all blasted with the levin
He stretches to the empty heaven
And to the Unknown God.

RINGING TO EVENSONG.

It is not sadness nor yet joy, as lone
I sit among the ruins of my life
And watch the red-hot ashes crumbling down,
Expiring spark by spark, and strive to warm

My chilly hands with their remembered heat,
And by the light that lingers in my mind
Essay to read once more the wrinkled Past,
And piece its broken letters. . . . I have climbed
Beyond the barren rocks of vain regret,
Whereon my spirit early dashed fond hopes
And wrecked its youth, that rich with noble scars
The freight of surer knowledge it might rise
Again and justly self-reliant, strong,
Ascend by certain steps to grander heights
And virgin lands. . . . Lo, from my vantage ground
Of glorious faiths and gray philosophies,
I sight at eve the dim and distant shores
Through rolling radiant mists that men call Truth,
And mountain peaks of snow that prop blue heavens,
In solemn vision which is more than sight
And crownèd awe. . . . But still, although I stand
On the white threshold of that inner Light
Which is the veiled face of God Himself
Wrapt in His robe of stars, Eternity,
Strange, struggling glimpses of the bygone days
Ghostly come back to me, come back to me,
Like wistful faces wan, in fire and smoke
And burning blooms, with claspt familiar hands
That do beseech me and then fade away,
And slow sad eyes big with unuttered pain
The gift of pleasure set on *me*, that smile
Through unshed tears. I see again the forms
Of magic maidens fair, with laughing lips
Red and rebellious, pouting for the touch
They yet refuse and yet will not resent.
I see the hoary heads so dear and wise
With garnered times and toils and lore unwrit,
Great with green laurels of imperial thought.
I hear the babbling messages of brooks
And children's voices and the angels' call
That carolled through my dreams, and was more clear
Than the dull prate of pedants big with facts

And terrors of mere law. . . . Around me stretch
 The bones of stranded creeds, that could not help
 Nor bear my burdened life in its sore need
 Safe into port. And low beneath me crawl
 The conquered clouds of foolish menace robbed,
 And baffled thunders in their sullen sleep
 Mutter and moan like giants chained. And yet
 Within my soul is God's sweet armèd peace.
 While all the bells of all the beauteous worlds
 Are ringing home my heart to evensong.

VIXI.

I have shouted with the thunder,
 I have wrestled with the wind,
 I have trodden ocean under
 When I left my heart behind.
 I have wandered in the forest
 And held frolics with the foam,
 And have felt the exile sorest
 From the shadows that would roam.
 Through a path of knightly stages
 I have joustèd to the end,
 While I asked no sordid wages
 And I leaned upon no friend.
 By the dark detested portal
 Which alone is passion's grave,
 I have gazed at the Immortal
 And returned to be a slave.
 In the highways
 And the byeways
 Of the city and the moor,
 Up the mountain,
 By the fountain
 With its spell and lion spoor,
 I have loitered, I have struggled,
 As a pilgrim late and lone,
 Through the giant mists that juggled

And the desert heart of stone.
And I learned the life of Nature
In the Australasian leas,
Where a larger legislature
Is impressed on soil and seas,
And the utterance is bolder
And the hand has broader sweep,
Than our freedom pinched and colder
In its custom's iron keep—
Where the labour is no burden
And the master is as man,
And the toiler gets the guerdon
That has justice in its plan.
In the courses
Of the forces
At their world-compelling sway,
With the scarlet
Lips and starlit
Eye, I followed night and day.
I have meted out the measure
Of the bitter and the sweet,
And come back to find the treasure
That was lying at my feet.
For it was delight to rough it
In the ecstasy of youth,
And to bear the sturdy buffet
Of the tempest and the Truth ;
Though around me roared the surges
With their sullen angry shocks,
And the wind like icy scourges
Drove me on the hungry rocks ;
When the trial was no stranger
And stood ever at my side,
And I loved the face of danger
As a man may love his bride.
On the journey,
In the tourney
With the beautiful and brave,

Breaking lances,
 Weaving dances,
 By the cradle and the grave,
 I have ruffled late and early
 And assayed my fullest powers,
 In the dusty hurly-burly
 And in ladies' gilded bowers ;
 Where the gifted and the gallant
 Were rejoicing in their pride,
 And her graces were a talent
 That the comely did not hide.
 I have lived and loved as others
 Through the sunshine and the shade,
 And been loyal to my brothers,
 And my share of history made.
 I have loved and lived, at bridal
 And at biers where nations prayed,
 And in feastings with the idle
 I have dressed and dined and played.
 In gray alleys
 And green valleys,
 Under stars or steaming dome,
 With the black man
 And the pack man
 I have been alike at home.
 When blue eyes were weeping, weeping,
 And the orphan dimly slept ;
 I have heard her, keeping, keeping
 The long vigil, while she slept.
 When despair drew nearer, nearer,
 And the widow's day was night,
 I have left it clearer, clearer
 With the loving that is light.
 When the curse came falling, falling
 On the innocent and weak,
 And the wolves were calling, calling,
 I was there revenge to wreak.
 When the kiss grew colder, colder,

And my darling sobbed for breath,
I prevailed to fold her, fold her,
In the kindness more than death.
And the scholar
And the dollar,
Both were pages for my book ;
I was serious
And mysterious,
As the Chinaman my cook.
In the palaces magnificent
I have been a pampered guest,
And on problems old terrifical
I have stamped *probatum est*.
When the tempest waxed exceedingly
I was ready for the stroke,
And I walked erect unheedingly
When the lightnings round me broke.
And with danger I toyed merrily,
With the pestilence and asp,
And the tiger I took verily
As a plaything in my clasp.
From the sweet mouth ripe and amorous
I have brushed the precious dew,
In the new world, great and clamorous,
Where the faint their youth renew.
I have sported,
I have courted,
And at distant fountains quaffed ;
With dark graces
And white faces
I have hunted, flirted, laughed.
I have heard the grasses growing
In the warm wet tropic eve,
I have seen the rivers flowing,
That a golden treasure leave.
I have skirted coral islands,
With their naked nymphs at play ;
And have scaled the Arctic highlands,

Where the midnight is as day.
I have wantoned with the Naiad
In the laughing liliated stream,
And gone nutting with the Dryad
In a pastime like a dream.
With the Cræsus in his factory,
I have watched the engines toil,
And the Pharisee's phylactery
I have dreaded much to soil.
I have pondered
As I wandered
Over all the lands and seas,
Of the fashions
And the passions
That can never give us ease ;
While the mermaid low was singing
Her sweet riddles in the deep,
And the ocean bells were ringing
The wild sea-birds unto sleep ;
And strange phantom forms, with tresses
Of green seaweed, from the gloom
Stole, with dank and dim caresses,
And delight that was but doom.
I have mixed with many peoples
And have broken virgin sods,
And have heard a thousand steeples
Tell a thousand different gods.
I have murdered pretty pigeons
And as other butchers done,
And tried raptures and religions,
But not found content in one.
And I only
Feel more lonely
In the roaring city marts,
As if guided
And divided
All astray from fellow hearts.
I have basked in smiles of Royalty,

And burnt incense at the shrine ;
I have paid a proper loyalty
To fair women and good wine.
I have supped with statesmen garrulous
About politics and port,
And been elegantly querulous
With grand dowagers from Court.
I have tested men's cupidity,
How the purest has his price ;
And found drops of worse acidity
In the angels without vice.
From the actor and his attitudes
I have learned he reasoned right,
While in theologians' platitudes
I but vainly sought for light.
In the trouble
Dark and double
Of the shadow and the spear,
I was master
Of disaster
And myself, and felt no fear.
I have sat with seers and Plato,
With old fountains flashing up,
And observed the solemn Cato
Growing softer in his cup ;
While the sweetness of the siren,
Which was mixed with madness then,
Broke the stays and rules of iron,
And the gods came down to men.
I have walked with maids diviner
Than the fairest that have names,
And when Love was the refiner
I have frolicked in the flames.
When the air was waxing crisper
In the languid palmy South,
I have drunk the honeyed whisper
Of the coy and crimson mouth.
Then with burning

Heart returning,
 And with penitent dim eyes
 That were moister,
 In the cloister
 I essayed new earth and skies.
 Under sackcloth and the ashes
 And behind forbidding books,
 I have seen through dusky lashes
 The sweet unregenerate looks.
 In the most ascetic stations,
 Where the passions ought to rest,
 I have felt the palpitations
 Of a warm and carnal breast.
 In the shrine that showed no mercy
 And the world esteemed as dross,
 I have found a fatal Circe,
 Though with rosary and cross;
 And the monk in mid devotions
 Or the penance of his cell,
 With unsanctified emotions
 Has gone sprawling at her spell.
 Armed with Latin
 Or in satin,
 High in honour, low with shame,
 After sentence
 And repentance,
 Beat the human heart the same.
 I have borne convention's pillory
 Where the truth too often stands,
 And the churches, grim artillery
 For the waving of white hands.
 I have striven to be dutiful
 To my country and my kin,
 And have plucked the roses beautiful
 From the bosom of bare sin.
 I have wandered with Euphrosynè
 In her silver-columned gloom,
 And gone back with dear Mnemosynè

To the early dew and bloom.
In temptation's golden crucible,
If the gleam did only strike,
I proved virtue was reducible
With the saint and all alike.
For the error
And the terror,
The abysses and the shoal,
And the kissings
With the missings,
Reached at last a common goal.
I have been as sourly sober
As the dullest of divines,
And with must of mild October
I have drowned myself in wines.
In the fantasies of fable
And the metaphors of creed,
With their adjectives unstable,
I have differed and agreed.
And I found, of all the visions
From beneath and from above,
In their dogmas and decisions,
There was nothing true but Love.
But on lips of solemn sages,
And in eyes with passion wet,
Though I trod a thousand stages,
I have never won it yet.
From the windings
And the grindings
Of the marches and the mill,
And the orgies
Of black forges,
I have come back empty still.
To the ledges crumbling, crumbling,
Of the flowery-mantled vice,
I have tottered stumbling, stumbling,
On the damnèd precipice.
When the light waxed dimmer, dimmer,

On the virgin peak or face,
And the storm fell grimmer, grimmer,
I was steadfast in my place.
If the wind was blowing, blowing,
And the waves were tossing high,
In a horror growing, growing,
Yet I heard my sister sigh.
By the ordeal shaken, shaken,
And of all but honour reft,
Though the best was taken, taken,
I was in my meanness left.
Out of losing,
In the choosing
Of fair Sodom's watered plain,
And my splutter
In the gutter,
I have found myself again.
I have slept on Jacob's pillow
And scaled ladders to the sky,
And at every peccadillo
Played that mortal man can try.
With the pretty painted Ethel
I have rocked on rose-hung streams,
And confessed my sins at Bethel
In the awful House of Dreams.
I have toiled and prayed and revelled,
And laid hundreds in the clods,
Courtied nymphs with locks dishevelled,
And served epithets and gods.
But the hope I gave to others,
And the rest that did renew
The poor shattered lives of brothers,
I have missed and must pursue.
Though for nothing
But gay clothing
Or the smile on beauty's cheek,
And for ever
In endeavour,

I must vainly sadly seek.
As I roystered, I have written
And made many books for men,
And in lust of battle smitten
With the sabre and the pen.
At the shock of slander's onset
I have hardly held my place,
And have marked the dying sunset
Flicker on the dying face.
With the sage in custom simple
I have worn a proper pose,
And seen cheek of maiden dimple
To a pure and perfect rose.
In the purple halls of plenty
I have drunk of pleasure's fill,
With the rustic sweet and twenty
I have shared the shadowed ill.
And the portion
Of distortion
Has been mine, like poisoned steel;
I have spoken
Truth, when broken
On the fate of iron wheel.
With the sinful I was tainted,
And as Vestals kept my soul,
While I marked the sun unsainted
With expiring aureole.
Like the gipsy I have travelled
With the heaven as canopy,
Though no dream has yet unravelled
Half the moonlight's mystery.
I have watched on Jacob's ladder
The fair angels come and go,
While they left the gray earth gladder
With their feet of virgin snow.
With the frozen I have shuddered
In the red Aurora light,
And uncharted and unruddered

Voyaged out into the night.
 Past abysses,
 Like Ulysses,
 I have flashed and scarcely 'scaped ;
 And I drifted
 Through the rifted
 Iron rocks with lilies draped.
 On the sweets of thought and action,
 And the bliss of ballet legs,
 And the wordy war of faction,
 I have feasted to the dregs.
 With the headlong I have hasted
 And delayed with prudes and pugs,
 And not left a cup untasted—
 If it drew from stolen jugs.
 I have sown beside all waters
 Solemn sayings and wild oats,
 And have felt in queerest quarters
 The sweet power of petticoats.
 I have learned from children's studies
 And the maiden's prayers and pleas,
 And the sword that sways and bloodies
 The blue bosom of our seas.
 By dim fable
 And the stable
 Old foundations of the Truth,
 I was shaken,
 And did waken
 To a second wiser youth.
 Sickness, pain and passion took me
 Down where wounded creatures hide,
 Though the Pharisee forsook me
 Passing on the other side.
 Mates with whom I loved to linger
 In their evil hour of grief,
 Would not even upraise one finger
 Or a word for my relief.
 Butterflies were far more steady,

Stocks and stones revealed more heart,
Than my guests who kissed me, ready
Then to play a Judas part.
Christians left me sad and lonely,
While I waited the black end,
And they prayed and cursed, and only
Has my dog remained a friend.
Life's enigma,
With the stigma
At its tortured bosom, bleeds ;
But the fiddle
Solves the riddle,
Better than ten thousand creeds.
I have passed through ordeals terrible,
In the blackest of black fire,
With a step that was inerrable
And a darker still desire.
From the flames and their fierce sediment,
Which my madness trod, I tore
Their red heart without impediment,
Till I gained the restful shore.
And the veil on Fate's dread history
Was no banning veil to me,
When I probed its awful mystery
And arose more fresh and free.
On the desert soil and arable
I have wisdom sought to find,
And yet found the hardest parable
Ever in a maiden's mind.
But dumb creatures
And dear features
Of sweet children at their play,
Gave me knowledge
That no college
Could with all its learning sway.
And I did not reap one pleasure
Such as these bestowed so well,
From the world with all its treasure

And all beauty with its spell.
With the bird that sang me stories
Of the kingdoms soft as sleep,
And its echoes of strange glories,
I did higher commune keep.
With the babe, on whose brow glistened
Yet the brightness of its fount,
I shone too, and shyly listened,
To the Presence on the Mount.
Ah! I gathered less from bibles
Than from modest virgin looks,
And the gospels were but libels
On the old unwritten books.
But the Vision
In derision
Still recedes, as I draw near;
Yet I follow
As the swallow
Sings the sun around the year.

THE MAN WHO KNEW NOT SORROW.

I know not why, but yet without a heart
A thing apart
I moved among my fellows and was kind
In outward semblance, though to suffering blind
And dead to sorrow, while the weak went down
Into the darkness like a dead man's frown,
And pain and terror made their palsied life
A hopeless strife;
While poor men rose and writhed a little space,
And tottered forth with shy and shambling pace
Beneath unequal burdens, fell, and on
Still stumbled into silence and were gone;
I saw them sunk in fever's putrid pen,
Nor sorrowed then.

I know not why but yet, without a heart
 Enslaved by art
And dazzling science with its sunlike sweep
That walked through space, and the abysmal deep
Eternity had sounded with its plan,
I had no mortal sympathy for man,
And stiffer than the cold sepulchral stone
 I lived alone ;
The innocents I saw trod low in mire,
And helpless infants passed through murderous fire
As to some Moloch, bathed in tender tears
And slain twice over with their cruel fears ;
Yet I, absorbed in dreams with which I dwelt,
 No sorrow felt.

I know not why, but yet without a heart
 Upon the mart
I bought and sold, and over-reached the fools
Whom fortune brought as profitable tools,
And found dishonest gold was always cheap,
While daily adding to the dirty heap ;
But, though I robbed the orphan of his crust
 And dearer trust,
And plunged the widow in still blacker woe,
Or threw the maiden to her bitterest foe
(As dainties to a dog), and left her dead
With love I poisoned at the fountain head,
And though behind me followed death and shame,
 No sorrow came.

I know not why, but yet without a heart
 Or human smart,
I wielded with bold hand the bloody knives,
And practised upon worn and weary lives
Of sufferers, in the home of mercy's arms
That clasped the sick and did them direr harms—
I supped on sighs and those despairing calls
 Beating deaf walls

And deafer bosoms, and held glorious feasts
Of long red torture wreaked upon the beasts,
That fell in awful hecatombs, to drape
A naked crotchet or give falsehood shape ;
But, though for science I made myriads rot,
I sorrowed not.

I know not why, but yet without a heart
I saw depart
Out of the hurly-burly one by one
My comrades, when their fighting days were done
And duty called them, stretching forth dim hands
That struggled idly with their iron bands
And clung to bosoms warm, their wild eyes wet
With vain regret ;
But, though familiar was my walk with each,
And they beside me in the fiery breach
Had stood, and borne for me the deadly blow
Which I deserved, that *them* had smitten low,
I made of losses in that front red line
No sorrow mine.

I know not why, but yet without a heart
Disease's dart
I watched, by careless wind or water thrown,
That pierced the tender fibres of my own,
And the grim shadow of its poison shed
On the full glory of the kingly head,
Till in the refuge of the equal ground
It dropt discrowned ;
Though wife and children laid them down to die,
And snapt the sweetness of the last true tie
Which fastened me to earth, and weeping went
Into the awful unmapped continent
Beyond this bourne, I felt no thrill
Of sorrow still.

I know not why, but yet, without a heart,
 A bitter start
My life put forth in the gray troubled seas
That break upon our little isles of ease
Arising here and there, green spots of calm,
Like cool dim temples set in pillared palm,
And fret at such small boundaries that keep
 Aloof the deep ;
Till, lo, one day I marked a maiden child,
Fair as a rosebud and by nought defil'd,
Who bent her trustful brow and fondly prayed
Unto a God who with her blindness played ;
But then the winter heart within me broke,
 And sorrow woke.

Now I at length know why, without a heart,
 A thing apart
I may no longer live and cannot die,
Who see a sadness in the azure sky,
And read the sentence of a solemn dearth
Betwixt the richest harvests of the earth,
And in the oldest beacons sure and bright
 A mocking light ;
And from my breast well oft unsummoned tears,
Mixed with the madness of forbidding fears,
Since I have found a God who under cloud
Weaves of our highest hopes a funeral shroud,
And but misguides us till we learn from graves
 That sorrow saves.

THE PRISON HOUSE.

For well nigh fifty years, a part
 It never chose at first,
In prison wrack, this panting heart
 Hath hid its heavenly thirst ;
The years had grimly come, and gone
 Down the same dreary track,

And still the struggling heart beat on,
Beneath its ruins black ;
But yet, in spite of penal rod,
It waved its captive wing,
And tried to tremble up to God,
And sing.

I saw the darkness deepen round,
And nameless horrors hang,
With ghastly sight and ghostly sound,
And only more I sang ;
The chains lay heavy, and they drew
All to their iron strife,
That ate into my soul, and grew
A portion of my life ;
None knew my bondage sore, none cared
What burdens they might give
My broken breast, and yet I dared
To live.

Though every door was under bar,
Through the wan window haze
Floated at times some fairy star,
To greet my hungry gaze ;
And angels came, in the dark hour
Of anguish lone and long,
Till all the night burst into flower
And overflowed with song ;
To them I stretched my straining hands,
As calls the caged dove,
And yet I dared in prison bands
To love.

But oft I chafed at brazen bolt,
And fetters darkly wound
On hand and foot, and made revolt
Against my burial bound ;
My spirit fretted to be free
And sang, nor might despond

In depths of pain, and pined to see
 The roses blue beyond ;
 Through crack and crevice of my cell,
 Sweet sudden gates would ope
 Their pearls, and yet I dared in hell
 To hope.

I feel the summer in the air,
 The life at fullest flood,
 That, framing old things young and fair,
 Makes music in my blood ;
 Glimpses of glorious mountain crests
 Gleam through the crannied walls,
 That bear new worlds on virgin breasts,
 With snowy pillared halls ;
 And yet, while bondage grows, I dare
 With louder songs from dust,
 In triumph over every care
 To trust.

The stripes fall heavy on me now,
 And weary is my will
 That scarce lifts up the bruised brow,
 Albeit they may not kill ;
 But if the cruel bolts are here,
 And barriers stare and start
 Around me, in the silence sere,
 They cannot bind my heart ;
 And yet, though sunlight never shone
 To bless one bitter tie,
 I dare to sing, and singing on
 To die.

THE RAPE OF THE ROSE.

I found it in a cottage room—
 They called me hard and cruel—
 Betwixt the doors of shame and doom
 I seized the rosy jewel ;

The lightning flashed its lurid fate,
The thwart and groaning thunder
Rolled grimly forth, as if the gate
Of hell were burst asunder ;
I bore it, though forbidding hands
Thrust out their blasting fingers
And flaming sword to brighter lands—
For love is lost that lingers.

The guardian of the threshold reared
His giant shield and shoulder,
But on I fought who nothing feared,
The peril made me bolder ;
A lion strode across my way,
Tremendous in the distance,
To prove when stricken low he lay
A stepping-stone's assistance ;
And fiery forms, that threatened harms
To cowards caught by errors,
Wreathed at the onset of my arms
With smiles their smouldering terrors.

Poured his loud malice then on *me*,
With petty tithes and morals,
The maskings of the Pharisee
That were but bells and corals ;
He damned me by his penal book,
And labelled me as sinner,
Seduced his neighbour's wife, and took
Devotions like his dinner ;
Me would he murder or make slave
With his own foolish fetter,
But tumbled in my ready grave,
Choked with his lying letter.

Beneath me reeled the earth and rocked,
And all the old foundations
Were shaken, and the rogue looked shocked
At my last depredations ;

The timid thought the end had come,
And opened hearts and purses,
Or tearful turned to bed, and some
Expended prayers and curses ;
The wantons painted more their skin,
And the grand best society
Went on in undetected sin ;
And praised their mock propriety.

A HARD QUESTION.

O have I lived for nought in deed,
Who echoed Nature's chime
And sowed the beautiful bright seed
That was (with roots in human need)
The blossom of a time ?
May I not enter through the Porch,
And see Truth's ever-burning torch
That only evil things may scorch
With its consuming flame,
And hear the voices of the Blest
In glory without name,
Who reap the service that is rest ?

O have I dearly loved in vain,
And have I idly sung ?
Hath Fate, which doth for all ordain
The measure of their joy and pain,
The compass of their tongue,
No lusted corner left for me
In that great Temple of the Free
Where mortals do their Maker see,
Beyond these earthly bars
Of fire and tears and darkness wrought,
And read above the stars
The unveiled splendour of all Thought ?

THE POET'S EUTHANASIA.

No crown for me, they say ! It matters not ;
Now I must wend the way of human lot
Alone, as I have lived alone with stars
Of wandering thoughts that burst the prison bars
Called earth, and led me still for ever on
By a dread pathway none before had gone,
Above the utmost waft of fancy's wing
And the great globes that move in rhythmic ring
World beyond world, out into unmaped space
Which is the glory of God's hidden face.
I see the way, that widens as it runs,
In the soft light of unarisen suns,
And brighter grows, as round me shadows fall
To shut me out from human claims and call,
And break the dazzling splendour that would blind.
I feel no fear, my unimprisoned mind
Did alway dwell in other realms and sweep
Without the bounds of this unquiet sleep,
And gathered in its hospitable arms
The solemn beauty or the secret charms
Of every sphere. Death is no foe to fly
When I have lived so in eternity,
And trodden its dim courts and made them one
With the sweet work this loving heart hath done :
And here is nothing strange, and the dark end
But the veiled kiss of a familiar friend.
I see the faces I have loved and known,
The angel faces now not more my own
Than they from childhood were, divinely dear,
That shared my toil and wiped away the tear,
But crowned with kingly peace and the pure joy
That deems this little life a passing toy.
I hear the voices that have hourly been
My comforters and guides through pastures green
Or iron rocks, not clearer than of old,
If with a rapture then not fully told.

Intelligences fair, from their blue calm
Of fixed and final rest, with pomp and palm,
They come, they come, a surging silver line,
To wave me welcome to the inner shrine;
And, as they step down the cloud-columned track,
The darkness opens like a rose, and back
For me the portals roll, the music peals,
The palpitating depth its truth reveals,
And in white petals of consuming light
Breaks into sudden bloom the heart of night.
I know these stately halls, these cloisters hung
In purple space, where the same lamps have swung,
Æons and æons at their silent task,
Which earth with its pale splendours could not mask;
And at the end of all the Presence lone,
Self-centred, on the insufferable throne
Of thunder. I have marked the lightnings here
Stab through and through the awful atmosphere
With their red daggers, and in them have bathed
My human heart with Deity enswathed.
The petty winds might rise, the bubbles rage,
I fought not with the potsherds of the age
That with the potsherds fought and fumed and made
A ripple on their miry ruts of shade,
And had no message and no meaning. Still
I stood apart, and from the hoary hill
Its treasure drew, and out of rugged stone
Bade the bright angel start with maiden zone
And conquering eyes. The wrath of lava streams
With woods and waters mingled in my dreams,
And wrought one passion. And the damned sin
Of the lost soul or Cain I felt akin
To me and mine, it had some fellow taint,
And found an echo in the templed saint.
I sought the grace that glorified the mud,
And made the sterile stock in beauty bud,
Out-reddening the shy blush on Hebe's cheek
Or morning's brow; I did not vainly seek.

I never spoke an unkind word to one,
I never deemed the longest day was done
Without some gentle charity. I cared
For sufferers, and with them my sunshine shared.
And, when the weary craved for wounds a rest,
I let the surf of sadness on my breast
Beat, and with nails of bitter shame and loss
I married my own bosom to the cross
Of sacrifice for others. This bowed back
Seemed to bear on its solitary track
The weight of worlds and sins of countless souls,
For whom I paid the last exceeding tolls
In daily dying tortures, and the hell
Heated for those who only love too well
And lose; though I would not recall the pain
To save myself, and let one fall again.
And now I die not, for love cannot die;
I simply loose the sole remaining tie,
That links me to the lot of common clay.
I live, I live; my grave-clothes drop away;
Fearless I go, with faith of burning fire,
Up the white steps of infinite desire.

SECTION II.

THE LIGHT OF THE AMETHYST.

THE LIGHT OF THE AMETHYST.

PROLOGUE.

Ye, who, through mocking mist,
 Armed with the mystic rod,
Led as the Triers list,
 Passing the sword have trod
Right to the amethyst
 Glory that circles God ;
Ye, who, through burning fire
 Walled to a solid flame,
Braving the Law's black ire,
 Dreading no shade of shame,
Found a fulfilled desire
 One with the nameless Name ;
Take from a maiden hand
 Firstling of maiden heart,
Plucked from the pleasant land
 Known not to vulgar art,
Where the strong Watchers stand
 Feeding the light apart.
Ye, who have walked before,
 Striven as I and won
Terrible right to adore
 Beauty denied to none—
Truth they in vain implore,

Sealed not by duty done ;
Ye are baptized in Day
 Risen from dreadful night,
Gilding the ghostly way
 Red with the purging fight,
Where it is death to stay
 Though it be all delight.
Hail to the gladness given,
 Hail to the sure repose,
Seekers, whose love has riven
 Portals that else would close,
Wresting the light from heaven
 Rayed to a perfect rose !
Hail to you, spirits high,
 Who from the blessed calm,
Hearing a whole world sigh
 Brought it the healing balm,
Brought the eternal nigh
 Bright with the victor's palm !
Ye, in a vigil lone
 Signed with the royal stamp,
Bound with the virgin zone
 Whether in court or camp,
Fashioned of thoughts a throne,
 Trimming a deathless lamp.
All through the ages gone
 Down to our barren grace,
Handing the lustre on
 Life to the darkest place,
Till it in splendour shone
 Sweet as God's very face.
Woman am I and weak,
 Yet in my breast a spark
Flutters that fain would speak,
 Rising above the dark
Bounds to some purple peak,
 Soaring as Eden's mark.
Ye have inspired my song,

Given me wings to fly,
 Carried me late and long
 Under a bluer sky,
 Out of the squalid throng
 Into Infinity.
 I in your conquering tread
 Followed and found the same,
 Plenty in famine spread,
 Honour beside the blame,
 Living beyond the dead,
 Glory above the shame.
 Ah! to be only a spray
 Lost in your fadeless crown,
 Only an unseen ray
 Blent with the white renown,
 Broadening till the day
 Brightens that goes not down.

PART I.

INCUNABULA.

When I was young,
 And breezes blew
 That sweetly sung
 From Edens new,
 I stept at once by strange ascension
 Outside the flesh,
 As into some fair Fourth Dimension
 Of beauty fresh.
 Then all dear things seemed possible,
 The unknown and impassable,
 The mighty and magnificent,
 The blessed and beneficent,
 The solemn thoughts and serious,
 The magic throbs mysterious,
 The pure and true and terrible,
 And all alike inerrable.

For I was young,
And I believed
What Sirens sung,
If they deceived.
And then the world was twined with us,
A thrilling portion
With no distortion,
And I would speak in rapture thus.
“ Dear heart
Of daring,
Apart
In caring
From every other,
Untaught to bend,
You have no brother,
Nor closer friend,
Save in the common curse of sinning
(Our human tie)
Or fatal wooing without winning;
And you and I,
Who never seemed to have beginning
And cannot die,
We shall range on our way in blest and beauteous thought
Beyond the realms of day and the great night of nought,
And follow glad green spring all round the laughing globes
Upborne on fancy's wing and in her royal robes,
In brighter being
Still farther seeing,
And on for ever
In sweet endeavour
Of broader giving
And deeper living,
While growing yet more fresh and fair
In larger and more liberal air,
To find the dear dread God past each most distant bound,
Who as we dimly plod seems never to be found,
And flies before us still and just eludes our grasp,
A light on every hill, a cloud we cannot clasp,

And yet concealed by pride
Keeps walking at our side,
Who is not here or there,
And yet speaks everywhere,
In duty wrought
And joy unsought,
In tear
Or fear."

Ah, thus in ignorance I spoke,
As into the new life I woke
And waves of laughter round me broke
In purple spray of pleasure ;
For to my innocent young eyes
Earth was a heaven, and the blue skies
In hyacinthine ecstasies
Spread at my tread their treasure.
And in its glory to my call
The great world, like a golden ball,
Lay at my feet and offered all
Its dew and fire and splendour ;
The bloom and passion of the days,
The wild roses in secret ways,
To me the sweetness of their rays
Gave like red lips' surrender.
For I was God myself and saw
Whate'er I wished in star or straw,
And mine the impress of the law
That made the moods of Nature ;
Upon the gloom I wrote the gleam
And glamour of my early dream,
The mossy stone and moonlit stream
Smiled at my legislature.
Dear heart, when I look back into the Past,
I see a sacred vision
Of solemn figures upon cloudland cast
As in divine derision,
And baby wonder that goes wider far
Than any creed or college,

And is a truer knowledge—
Which stays not at the uttermost dim star,
But from the flaming fountains
Of earthquake-ridden mountains
Steps forth unscorched by fire and without scar,
And even in splendid error
Feels not the touch and terror,
And bursts like cobwebs every iron bar.
For then the Heaven was nearer,
The very sun seemed clearer,
And all the lands were bathed in dewy bliss
Fresh from their loving Maker's last long kiss,
That made the darkness dearer,
And threw a glory on the lost abyss.
The golden dreams of fable
Looked, in that living Light,
More certain and more stable,
Than facts of vulgar sight;
And armed with maiden might,
In white robes we were able
To sit at God's own table,
As by a native right;
We cut the prison cable,
Which anchors man to night.
All things, the giant laughter
Of thunders in their lair,
The owls that on the rafter
Saw things before and after
Up the old belfry stair,
Said then,
Amen.
For verily and merrily the great world swung
Backward and forward,
Southward and nor'ward,
Seaward and shoreward,
So beautiful and dutiful, like the bells hung
In the gray church tower
With the gray church clock,

When they ring in their power
And the bases rock,
In the shine and shower,
And the breezes knock
Till the gates unlock
Of their Lady's bower.
For then we were so near the breast of Nature,
My happy heart and I,
We knew the tongue of every mortal creature
And those that never die,
And read the record on each veiled feature
Where the grand secrets lie ;
We heard the murmur of the unborn nations
That struggle to the birth,
And the broad pistons of the deep foundations
Within their iron girth.
And all was nigh,
The far and high,
As sob and sigh ;
And all was sweet,
The snowflakes' feet,
The lips that meet ;
And all was true,
The rose and rue,
The wandering blue ;
And all was fresh,
The seaweed's mesh,
The peach's flesh ;
And all was fair,
The dungeon stair,
The gypsy's hair ;
And all was joy,
The broken toy,
The coppice coy ;
And all was great,
The willow plate,
The cottage gate ;
And all was love,

The mating dove,
The pink foxglove ;
And all was hope,
The midnight cope,
The greensward slope ;
And all was God,
The blooming sod,
The judgment rod ;
And all was ours,
Dead leaves and flowers,
Eternal dowers.

We strolled among the distant stars
As in our native street,
Who owned no clouds or prison bars,
Nor wot of winding sheet ;
We solved the riddle of the years
With flash of simple faith,
And from the mystery of tears
We tore the lying wraith ;
While lightly laid on every wheel
That rolls the systems round,
Our ready love could always feel
The pulses at their bound,
And catch the spirits at their spinings
Behind the sapphire loom,
And trace the buds and fair beginnings
Of melody and bloom,
For ever weaving
Robes of Spring.
And yet deceiving
As they sing.

We knew our buildings were but Babel
And yet most blessed still,
And truer in their pictured fable
Than creeds that threaten ill ;
We knew the glory of illusion,
Which turns to Eden toys,
Was better than the sour confusion

Of facts denying joys ;
We knew the leaves in foolish dances
Taught truth that never dies,
While feeding on mere bubble fancies
And beautiful fond lies.
For Life and Love
From wells above
Bathed all our days in splendour,
And Love and Life
In fruitful strife
Strove which could most surrender ;
They washed our feet
And made them sweet
As may in mountain gorges,
They washed our hands
And broke the bands
Of custom's iron forges ;
They washed our face
With secret grace
And set the clods aglowing,
They washed us quite
As angels white
From treasures overflowing.
But then we had a short and simple creed,
No heaven in hopeless distance,
That wrought a bondage of our bitter need
And mocked at vain resistance—
Ah ! then we fully lived and loved indeed,
Just in mere glad existence.
For Life was utter Love without the thorn
And Love was Life in blossom,
And evening had the brightness of the morn
Breathed from its scarlet bosom.
We caught the west wind where it lay asleep
And chained in purple tether,
And with the silver clouds we bade it sweep,
To romp and rhyme together.
We saw the petal how it reached its curve,

The exquisite fair finish,
And colour ripened every cell to serve
Lest one hue might diminish ;
We heard deep down the mills in silence grind
All beauty into being,
And that last marvel the consummate mind
Of consecrated seeing.
We learned why roses laugh and redden yet
In summer's wanton weather,
The message of the moss with rapture wet,
The rainbow on a feather,
The secret of the fragrant violet,
The passion of the heather.
For work was play,
And every day
Brought its own proper meetness ;
And all the nights
Gave solemn sights
And miracles of sweetness ;
And gloom and gleam,
The truth and dream,
Were one to indiscreetness ;
And broken vows,
With baby brows,
Had perfect incompleteness.
And all the wonder of the world
Awake and sleeping,
Was in a little dewdrop curl'd
That smiled through weeping.
The cowslip bell,
The pimpernel,
The oak in its proportion,
Ere art's profane distortion—
We spoke the speech
Observed by each ;
We had their hidden measure,
And it was supreme pleasure,
My heart and I,

That loved to lie
Upon the greensward as it glanced and threw
(Beneath the wind that kisses to it blew)
Waves after waves their course to run,
And in its perfumed strength and stature grew
With every hour to something fair and new,
In the embraces of the sun.
And O the broadening billows,
Under the blue sky,
Of pastures bright and pillows
For the butterfly ;
If on the grasses dusty
Fell the wind too lusty
And would crease the clover,
As it bustled over,
Or assayed the metal
Of a rumpled petal ;
Yet the greensward tender
Made a full surrender,
Loved the wild wind's wooing,
Though it were undoing
Of its open arms
And their unruffled charms.
It softened in a simple
Gladness, like the dimple
On the cheek of maiden
Kneeling, ere her tryst,
Before the pictured blessing
And the calm caressing
Of the Holy Christ ;
It welcomed to its breast and border,
As they heaved and sparkled up,
That breath which gave in dear disorder
Life to bee and buttercup.
The daffodils in all their splendour nodding
In the scented air,
The castled snail with its grave burden plodding
Up its strawberry stair,

That pretty death's head, the exclusive spider,
 Making love a meal,
 The crimson sunsets that then opened wider
 And did more reveal,
 The yellow lichen on the roof, the pebble
 Polished white and round,
 The madcap gust that raised a peevish treble
 Bursting from its bound,
 In love that mellows
 Were our fellows.

Such playmates had we there and then
 Before we felt the bonds of men
 And fashion with its cruel force;
 We drank sweet living at its source,
 And mixed our souls with every beam
 Or waft of wind or tender dream,
 And as we stept to earth's true story
 Were one with God and all His glory,
 And in His goodness done
 Were one.

O it was beautiful to *be*,
 Linked to the very rock and tree,
 The autumn leaf, the moonlit wave,
 The wild flower on the quiet grave,
 The murmur of the rushy brook,
 The red cup in the mossy nook,
 The shimmer down the shadowed pond,
 With wonderful and secret bond;
 To know a unity in all,
 The baby's cry, the blackbird's call.
 The blossom's bell, the armed thorn,
 The breeze's chanting to the morn,
 Beneath the mystic outward strife
 Of flowing, glowing, blowing life;
 To feel that in the silent stone
 A hidden music had its throne,
 A prayer that waited but the time
 To wake in praise's bubbling chime,

And flash the fire of its address
 To the sweet awful Loveliness,
 That breathes alike in sun and clod,
 The known and unknown Human God.

PART II.

PSYCHAGONIA.

Then my heart and I
 Stept serene and eager to the front,
 Where the actors vie
 With each other, bathed in Love's young font ;
 Shielded with the trust,
 Which is not an arm, but victory,
 Over lies and lust,
 And conceals a soul of rosemary ;
 All devoid of doubt,
 All possessed with hope's celestial fire
 Rushing in and out
 On the wings of infinite desire.
 Ruddy ran the blood
 In the bosom beating fast to fate
 With its living flood,
 Red as juice within the pomegranate.
 But was this the life of being,
 In the unveiled scar,
 And the scornful bar ?
 And was this the light of seeing,
 In the mocking star
 Still for ever from us fleeing
 Higher and more far ?
 Was I sleeping, did I waken
 From false dreams of beauty shaken
 Into dead blank night
 Of despairing flight,
 But to find myself forsaken
 All but of affright ?

Ah! I dreamed,
And in my wild fevered vision
Earth was seamed
With grim sutures of derision,
Which upon my will's decision
Coldly gleamed.

Yes, the world was robed in fond fallacious mist,
Dear illusive depths beyond the amethyst
And the emerald which met the curious eye;
Earth was not eternal yet, nor heaven the sky;
Forms were fleeting, and through change their features moved
To the goal of something strange and fair and proved,
If we passed the mourner's wreath and mourner's bell;
And to faith that looked beneath them all was well.

The ideal
Was the real,
And the glimmer
Grew not dimmer
On the star-lit,
Skies and scarlet
Lips of maiden,
Honey-laden;
And the blushes
Of the flushes,
In the bosom
Of the blossom
Still were cherished,
Though they perished
To our blindness
And unkindness.
We waxed duller,
Not the colour
Or gold metal
Of one petal;
We fell stupid,
Not the Cupid
In the roses,
And the posies

Of sharp tansy
And the pansy ;
We were dying,
Not the flying
Flowers and fancies,
God's romances ;
We were dead
Dreams instead.

Fickle were our moods and tenses,
Prejudiced and vain,
Veering with each pain,
And through avenues of senses
Sights and sounds with false pretences
Passing duped the brain ;
Dazzled easily, and driven
Like the morning dust,
Was conceit called trust,
By the first small buffet riven
And to the last fancy given,
Caught with every gust.

Nay, we could not, and we could not then believe
Earth did truly and unduly thus deceive,
We were chidden and forbidden to draw nigh,
And the fountains of the mountains flashed too high
For poor mortals, and the portals of the Day,
To our wonder would not sunder on the way,
And the resting was the jesting of a Force
That in terrors knew not errors or remorse,
And with mocking set its blocking at each gate
Or duped asking with the masking of black fate,
And made living the misgiving of a breath
Which the story of our glory blew to death.

Therefore did my heart and I
Take the bitter blame,
Swear the bloom could never die—
Ashes were the flame ;
We determined all was good
Through the suffering years,

Mercy though with weeping stood
In prevailing tears ;
All was better than it seemed,
Sadnesses were kind,
And the loss and cross redeemed
By the gain behind ;
And, in spite of damning fall
With the piercèd breast,
Earth was really Heaven, and all
Always for the best.
And the dimness
With the grimness
Doubt would find,
Were confusion
And delusion
Of the mind.
So we sallied forth to welcome all,
Even vices' vermin
Or the fool in ermine,
And to see a bliss beneath the pall ;
Forth to see a grace in every brand,
And a more than lustre
On the blighted cluster
Of the grapes that baulked the harvest hand ;
To discern a promise on the brow
Of decay and ruin,
And the rogues that sue in
Courts of shame that to injustice bow ;
To profess that ill is good and wrong is right,
And the victim's portion
Is not dire distortion,
And the crown of sorrow is delight ;
To be sure the wickedness is scourged,
Not the baby weakness,
Not the holy meekness,
Which of nothing is for nothing purged ;
And be blind to every blank, or stain
Where the bayonet bristles,

And pluck thorns from thistles,
Or find freedom in the iron chain.

Then within the strife
Of all the sweet
Many-coloured life
Under our feet,
Into the wild stress
Still tossing up
Foam of bitterness
From hatred's cup,
Gaily bent and clad
Adown we plunged,
Deeming all the sad
Was quite expunged,
Hoping all the ills
Were but a dream,
And the shadowed hills
Withheld a gleam,
And the cruel might
Betrayed no curse,
Blemishes and blight
Could yet be worse,
Woe and weary pangs
Were not a part
Of despair with fangs
At every heart,
Man was God, and knew
All *He* could know,
God was man, and drew
The Heaven below.

Oh ! it was not utter sorrow,
Sunshine was not always brief,
And the pallid face of grief
Dared at times with joy to borrow
Blushes from the coming morrow,
Which assured a fond relief.
Men were good and true at seasons,
And showed pity to the poor—

Sought their suffrages and floor,
When they had sufficient reasons
And could prate of party treasons,
Not the wolf outside the door.
We were young and we would purge the nation
With the rapt reformer's broom,
And arrayed it with imagination
Working at its wondrous loom ;
Youth is such a wise and strong magician
It can glorify the gloom,
And in sickness be its own physician
On the very eve of doom ;
In black forges'
Fiery orgies,
It can breathe unharmed and bloom ;
On the crumbling
Edge of tumbling
Precipices it finds room ;
From mad surges
It emerges
Fairer, as from earthquake's womb ;
Rising younger
In the hunger
And the horror of the tomb.
So we wandered forth about the lands,
Took the sweetness with the sour,
Proved the softness of bright maidens' hands,
Sipped the honey of the hour ;
In the chalice
Even of malice
Found some grateful drops to drain,
Tried the measure
Of each pleasure
And the inmost pulse of pain.
We were gallant knight and faithful squire
Bound upon no certain quest,
While before us seemed to float the fire
Which was burning in the breast.

Love and dangers
Were no strangers
On our daring, devious road,
Bliss and beauty,
Death and duty
Were a glad and constant goad.
Shade and sunshine came alike to us,
And with calm we wedded storm,
Frost and heat were comrades both, and thus
Did we taste each fount and form.
All the pages
Of the ages
Which had gone before we read,
How the venal
Life had penal
Terrors if with halting tread.
From the blossom of the present all the dew
Still we fashioned to a toy,
Sure to find us something fair and new
What we sought in careless joy.
In the message
And the presage
Of the coming years, we saw
Mercy's sentence
For repentance,
And for Pharisees the Law.
For we looked at Nature and at man
Through the wish that kindled thought,
And on chaos traced the perfect plan
Which our own deception wrought.
And our glosses
Gilt the crosses
Reared as milestones on our path,
And our pity
Veiled the city
Doomed like Sodom unto wrath.
Down into the awful deep and burning crater
Whence is banished alway sleep, gazed the creator

Youth, and gazing could but weep ; and hell grew greater
With the beauty that we brought and that fresh glory
Which against the evil fought and changed the story,
And washed out with tears unbought the footprints gory.

Yet upon the road
Darker with the load
Which was only ours,
In the summer flowers,
Brighter with the care
We agreed to share
With a brother's breast
Who despaired of rest—
Yet we journeyed on,
While our fancy shone
Over graves and dust
Of defeated trust,
And on ruin played
In its lines arrayed,
Seeking balm for shame,
Though it never came.
Down beside the pastures yellow
Dotted red with kine,
Where the creature found a fellow
In the celandine,
And the bennets laughed and rustled
In their virgin dress,
As the breeze about them bustled
Wild with happiness,
And the bee in search of nectar
Rode the sunlight's ray,
And the spider like a spectre
Gloomed and glanced away,
And the stream the meadow nibbled
As it chattered by,
And the lazy rooks were scribbled
Black against blue sky ;
There we watched betimes and waited
For the saving Sight,

Till sank low on us belated
Evening's rose of light.
But the promised ill's unfolding,
As a flower in flame,
With its weary long withholding,
Never to us came.

In the maddening hurly-burly of the masses
Risen up erect in sovereign might,
Like new continents to life and light,
From a surging sea of jealous rocky passes
And the doles and burdens of the tyrant classes,
Who had kept them groping in the night ;
In the market of the million, where the riddle
Of eternity is sharply cut
With the steel, as in the starving hut,
And, while unlaid ghosts are stalking in the middle,
Jesters dance upon the graves and dine and fiddle,
Till the judgment door is on them shut ;
In the senate vulgarized with venal thunder
And the downward and demented race,
Not for honor but for pelf and place,
Where betwixt the cup and crime or bigot blunder
Easy patriots conspire to hound and plunder
Empire to the dunghill of disgrace ;
In the chamber of the student early christened
At the font of learning with the name
Which alone the savage soul can tame,
While the awful dews Divine of wonder glisten
Yet upon his carven brow—we fondly listened,
For the saving Sound that never came.

In the blossom stigma,
On the baby's brow,
Frowned the same enigma
Then that darkens now.
Where the cheek was moister
With the sacred tear,
In the court and cloister
Fell the blasting fear.

In the slum and chapel,
Where they mumbled still
The forbidden apple,
Hung the haunting ill.
With the woman sainted
Lurked the nameless blight,
As with wantons painted
For their damned delight.
On the ruin hoary
And the laughing blade,
Like a garment gory
Dropt the dreadful shade.
In the red gold tresses,
Mouth of crimson bloom,
Serpent's grim caresses,
Lay the common doom.
On the bride's adorning,
As in duty's call,
Mystery and mourning
Reigned alike in all.
Ah! the clue expected
By our loving gaze,
Dawned not on dejected
Hope, from lurid haze.
In the curses muttered,
Where the blessing shone,
There the same unuttered
Agony writhed on.

Yet, though every joy seemed brief and hollow,
We essayed in dim, wild ways to follow
That desired, delayed and unseen Vision,
Which would yield the one Divine decision,
Making sweet the sorrow and explaining
All the horror of the dumb complaining.
So we loved and strove with men and pondered,
As we soared or sank and blindly wandered
Up the sheer black sides of rocky ranges,
Down the sunless gulf that never changes,

After the one Voice for which we hearkened,
 Though yet more and more the rough road darkened,
 While the slow faint steps waned short and troubled,
 And the deep night of the blank breast doubled.

But in frost and autumn flame,
 Though we looked and listened
 Till our wet eyes glistened,
 The solution never came.

This sad heart and I,
 In the spring's green clothing
 And our fresh betrothing
 With a fairer tie,
 Knew that we must die
 And the bond was nothing.
 Yet the passion and the will
 Ineradicable still,

Light of seeing,
 Breath of being,
 That deep principle
 All invincible,
 With its rapture
 For the capture
 Of the prize we ever missed,
 If the warm lips almost kissed,
 Grandly bare us up and on,
 Though no guiding beacon shone,
 And the light within had gone.

PART III.

DYSTHANASIA.

But now
 My brow
 Is dim with sadness,
 The light
 Is night
 And mirth is madness;

While on the face
 Of morning's grace,
 If mountain top or daisied meadow,
 On green water
 Or gossamer
 Hangs the eclipse of evening's shadow.
 My heart and I
 Know we must die
 And the sweet spell of earth be broken,
 The fairest tie
 Is but a lie,
 The truest word was vainly spoken.
 For all will surely pass,
 Like leaves and summer grass,
 The prayer of hallowed hush,
 The magic maiden's blush,
 The stain of jewelled hand,
 The blood on rusty brand,
 The palace on the mount,
 The pitcher at the fount,
 The love and crownèd lust,
 The graveyard and its dust,
 The master and his ass,
 The golden creed or class.
 Not simply in the flower, but on the summit hoary,
 In weakness and in power is writ *memento mori* ;
 On blazing poppy mead or field of battle gory,
 In letters plain we read the same sad ancient story.
 For all in season pass,
 And all must perish
 Whate'er we cherish ;
 Alas !
 Give me a crown of withered leaves,
 A sceptre of the straw,
 A throne of shadowed hopes and sheaves
 Beneath the mildew's law,
 A court of want that grimly weaves
 For castles' pride or cottage eaves

One famine's blighting flaw
And awe ;
For life is but the lurid breath
Of death.
Our dawning opened fair and free
Its golden gates of splendour,
Gate above gate in blessed bond
Like bridal union tender,
Gate above gate and gate beyond
Sense and its base surrender.
The sparrow's note was then a psalm,
No poor thing had to borrow,
The shore was ever white and calm
With happy waves of sorrow,
And in the promise of the palm
Immeasurable morrow.
The winds were angels we knew well
That hourly brought assistance,
We nowhere saw a sign of hell
But heaven in each blue distance,
The stocks and stones had all a spell,
And all in God existence.
Fancy, that then had wings to fly,
Outflew the hunted widgeon,
The heart leapt up at every cry
Of mating thrush or pigeon,
And over earth its purple sky
Beautiful spread Religion.
For Love was then
The king of men.
It crowned the humblest creature,
And turned to gold
The moss and mould,
And found some royal feature.
But now King Love
Has fled above
And gone to Mars or Venus ;
I and my heart

Feel we must part,
And night has come between us.
No longer free,
I only see
The darkness round and under,
And gilded doors,
With marble floors,
Awake no more to wonder ;
In living clay
Death and decay,
As in the doomed and dying,
Are all I mark,
And all is dark,
The wedding and the buying.
The gloom goes on,
And light that shone
When very hope had dwindled,
Deserts my side,
Though once so wide
It worlds with glory kindled.
In earth and skies,
My clouded eyes
Discern no joy or vision,
And dimly trace
Instead of grace
Mere ashes and derision.
My tortured mind
Is deaf and blind
To sight or sound of beauty,
And heeds no call
Beneath its pall,
When clash the swords of duty.
Blemish and rust,
Despair and dust,
On fair young foreheads linger,
In bloom and blade
And shine and shade,
The brand of a dead finger.

Among the ghosts of creeping fears the life grows sick and numb,

And with the rolling of the years the prophecies are dumb.

For something now has vanished,

A music from the streams,

The rapture of the dreams ;

And I am cold and banished

To wolds of winter gleams,

By the ice hammer planished

Along their wrinkled seams.

The glamour and the greeting

That blew with every gust

And chimed with simple trust,

With more than lovers' meeting,

Have passed as all things must ;

The dear old world was fleeting,

The dear old gods are dust.

The glow, the gleesome shiver,

That thrilled the lonely lot

And brightened the worst blot,

Have set on rock and river ;

The Dryads now are not,

No darts has Cupid's quiver,

And where fruits rest they rot.

The smile upon sweet Nature's mouth that led the seasons forth,

It is not in the sunny South, it is not in the North ;

And that enchanting nameless charm I ever mourn and miss,

Which clasped me like a snowy arm and veiled a crimson kiss.

Grim science with its ghastly doubt

Snuffs out

The pretty lamps that faith had lighted,

And with its finger damp and cold

And old

The darling buds of joy has blighted ;

Behind it creeps the desert, made

Of shade

And mocking shame that is not living,
 Before it goes the cry of fears
 With tears
 And awful murmur of misgiving.
 Romance is spoiled of splendid gloom
 And bloom,
 By this forbidding fatal spectre,
 Which with its knife and funeral robe
 And probe
 Freezes the fount of all our nectar;
 Which pokes about and weighs and pries
 And lies
 Though at its step we groan and languish,
 And finds beneath its microscope
 No hope,
 And gloats on the good news of anguish.
 For all the sweetness and completeness of the earth,
 That in its measure plucked a pleasure out of dearth,
 And knew that peril was not sterile and would seed
 In more than fiction's benedictions at our need,
 Or opened portals for the mortals who had none
 And promised laughter should hereafter yet be won,
 These sorely shaken have forsaken now the lands,
 With all the waving and the saving of white hands.
 The ruined tower
 Has lost its power,
 The wondrous walls
 Are cattle stalls,
 The holy shrines
 Are human swine's,
 On solemn saints
 The scoffer paints,
 The dear church bell
 No tale can tell,
 The sceptic's wits
 Pull God to bits,
 Old pomp and pride
 In embers hide,

And on their graves
 Drink sots and slaves.
 The Naiads do not wanton in the waters
 And peep from nodding flags,
 Or lie voluptuous among liliated quarters
 Where the late moonbeam lags ;
 And on the castled crags,
 I see not now my Dreamland's golden daughters
 Bewitched by cruel hags,
 And the gray wolf that at their bidding slaughters.
 From the mere's lucent lip,
 Whence in these days have passed the forms of fable,
 I see no Undine slip
 With beautiful bare hip
 Into blue deeps of palace gate and gable
 So dimly and deliciously unstable,
 Where pearls and diamonds drip
 Down on the silver floor and sapphire table.
 I read no fairy lore
 On emerald rings and in the purple valley,
 Where shy winds with the sheltered violets dally
 And rob their perfumed store ;
 From legend's misty shore,
 Gay shadows of old knights no longer sally ;
 And haunted rivers murmur musically,
 No more, no more, no more.
 My heart and I
 With sacred tie
 Are somehow rudely widely sundered,
 And in our bright
 Young joyous might
 Of all that makes life living plundered.
 I and my heart
 Now walk apart,
 Who once were knit in happy marriage,
 While over both
 And plighted troth
 Creaks Science with its vulgar carriage.

What do they leave,
 Who thus bereave
 A suffering world of sinful masses?
 Darkness and dust,
 A murdered trust,
 A few retorts and bones and gases.
 For in the whirl of atoms struggling through their hostile
 parts,
 There is no room with all this juggling for the grace of
 hearts.

And in the crucible
 God is reducible
 To fantasies and fears;
 And bitter blinding tears
 Are just completing
 Glands' secreting;
 And when we feel awry,
 Our nervous energy
 Escapes and rushes
 Red in blushes;
 And the world-shaping thought
 We deemed salvation,
 Little is or nought
 But cerebration.
 And all is right,
 And all is night,
 Though it conceals the Heaven it smutches,
 Stays our flight
 And steals delight,
 Bequeathing only cripples' crutches.
 But that is all,
 For Christ or Paul.
 Yes, Science is not pretty but then it is proper,
 And explains away your soul for a mere copper;
 Here is a heap
 And quite dirt cheap,
 And truly nowise better
 With its gags and fetter,

For though it be most perfect and most pat,
 Yet (curse it!) it wants something, it wants *that*—
 The indefinable
 And unassignable,
 The atmosphere and hush,
 The coaxing and the gush
 Of some sweet hoarded question's
 Infinite suggestions,
 Very grace
 Of God's veiled Face;
 Which lurks in green sad corners
 Where the joys are mourners,
 Suddenly dropt down
 A glad and heavenly crown,
 In wondrous ways appointed,
 On the head anointed;
 That pure and perfect charm,
 Whose bliss may not be uttered,
 And is faintly muttered
 By the reverent heart that watching waits
 And wonders at the golden gates,
 Until they open with their torches
 Rosy lines of pillared porches,
 And the secret Sight
 With its redeeming might;
 That kindly Spell
 Which could have drawn with its true magic
 Souls from hell
 And for a season lulled the terrors tragic,
 If in Easter brief
 Yet with a sure relief,
 Is dead, is dead,
 And reigns instead
 On butchered love and palsied prayer
 Science the Slayer.
 And why should I live tamely on,
 When every gift of life is gone?
 Oh! why not pass

With summer grass,
And April showers,
Or sweet May flowers,
That as they die in beauty still
The richer world with fragrance fill?
Let me some blossom of the mind,
A white-winged fancy leave behind,
A seed to save
The crouching slave,
That from my grave
Shall wax a splendid thought, and spread
Its branches fair
And purple air
In lepers' lair,
And raise the fallen and the dead.
Are there not higher
Temples where
God comes yet nigher
Man than here?
Are there not fairer lands in legions
With no sad defiling soil,
And rose-soft fanes and lily regions
Where the work is without toil,
And great sweet lamps of holy oil
For ever burn, and all the burdens
Are delights and restful guerdons
Claspt not by our serpent soil?
May I not flee the gabble
Of these hateful climes
In our poor withered times,
The glare, and strife, and rabble,
Mixing brighter babble
With yon sacred chimes?
May I not in a broader sphere
Do labour that will not turn sere,
And sing in simple childlike trust
The truths I know because I must,
And there throw out the shoots of infinite warm love

Which now die at their roots ere they can climb above ?
 Here all is vain and trifling,
 And the soul
 Within a world of stifling
 Stark controul,
 On food that does not nourish
 Finds no room,
 And cannot flower and flourish
 In its tomb.
 Earth is but God's apprentice art,
 In other worlds He gives His heart.
 And thither would I fly,
 To a far bluer sky
 And greener shore
 Of blessed store,
 Where rolls and rests our home Eternity,
 For evermore.
 And now my eager spirit
 Would its home inherit
 And outspreads its wings,
 To the white court and column
 Where in session solemn
 Reign its brother kings.
 Go, life, and break ; my heart has long been broken ;
 And I have spoken.

PART IV.

PALINGENESIS.

Yet, O yet
 How forget
 All the promise and the power
 Stored within the rose's bower,
 Subtle shoots that gleam and grow
 From that virgin snood of snow,
 Where the lily fain would tell
 Its eternal parable ?

Yet from death and bitter pain
We awoke and lived again,
We arose, I and my heart,
To a new diviner part,
Slept outside the rude crude strife,
Through redeemed affection
And its resurrection,
Into the calm hallowed life
Great with all the added love
Of the greater world above,
Bright with all the blessed glow
Of the brighter founts below,
Sweet with all the sacred bliss
That the selfish seekers miss
Of the sweeter hidden grief
Which is its own one relief,
Fair with all the solemn grace
In that secret beauty
Of a broader duty,
Reflex of God's very face.
In the world, not of it,
With its poor vain profit,
Lived we but lived needingly,
Loved we and exceedingly,
Strove we but most graciously,
Gave we and gave spaciously.
Soft things made more slenderly
Touched us and right tenderly,
With a true note amorous
In the rough press clamorous,
And white wings celestial
Waved in ways terrestrial.
Why should we by careless touch
Tamper with the sacred plinth
Or the purple hyacinth,
And be curious overmuch—
How the solemn legend runs
Carven not by human hands,

Numbering for fated lands
 All the passion of the suns ;
 How within the blossom's breast
 Traced with keen and trembling dart,
 Lie upon its bleeding heart
 Words of woe that cannot rest ?
 Why should man desire to know
 What is writ in books below,
 Purposes and mystic plan
 Voiceless since the world began,
 Hidden by the crimson glove
 Of the flower that whispers love,
 Shouted by the north wind's breath
 When it drives and threatens death,
 Painted on the clouded sky
 Peeping through with azure eye,
 Dashed with colour warm and wet
 On the weeping violet—
 Why should man desire to know
 What is writ in books below ?
 Why should man desire to tell
 What is so ineffable,
 All the darkness of the years,
 All the trouble of the tears,
 All the sadness of the soil,
 All the burden of the toil,
 All the meaning of the rod,
 All the Silence that is God—
 Why should man desire to tell
 What is so ineffable ?
 Why should man desire to see
 What is said by tower and tree,
 What is with the sunrise sown,
 Ever read and never known,
 Glimpses of an iron fate,
 Gleams of more than angel state,
 Surges, scourges, crowns for kings,
 Ashes, lashes, murmurings—

Why should man desire to see
What is said by tower and tree?
Ah, when mortal man is such,
Why be curious overmuch?
Oh, it were for us divinely better,
Clogged with our old dragging earthly fetter,
Through the dimness of our mournful mazes
Just to gather on our road the daisies,
As we meet them, and to take the pleasure
Where we find it, and not ask the measure—
Just to wish for welcome words and scorning
With a calm content the same good morning,
When they come as they will come in kindness
If we bravely greet them without blindness;
Not to flout the fond lips that would kiss us,
Nor to love ourselves like vain Narcissus;
Not to seek beyond the scope of reason,
And in idle sport to play at treason,
Not to make disease or mad desiring
The one joy and toy of false inquiring;
But to hail the portion that comes double,
Shine and shadow and delight and trouble,
Each to check the other and make sweeter
Days that nowise else could be completer.
Life is large and many-sided giving,
Life is the full sum of all and living,
Life is solved by being, and not questions
Raising like the dead but dead suggestions.

So we lived, my heart and I,
Not as lives the varlet
Clothed in black or scarlet,
Just because we chose to die,
And had broken the last tie
Which with golden tresses
And voluptuous dresses
Bound us to a glittering lie;
So we lived away from toys
In the kingly station

Of renunciation,
 With its true sublimer joys
 Of the creed that never cloy,
 And we found the Tansy*
 Blooming by the Pansy†
 In the Love that self destroys—
 The divine
 Anodyne.

Lo, the Guardians of the race
 From their upper awful place,
 Spirits of the great and good,
 Men and god-like womanhood,
 Who above the fear of fate
 Watch for ever at the gate,
 Shutting out that world from this
 With its sensuous synthesis,
 Looked in reverend pity down,
 As we sank and seemed to drown
 In the stream whose hungry flow
 Carries all at length below—
 All save those in blessed pain
 Dying but to rise again;
 So they took us by the hand
 Through a dim and dolorous land,
 Led us blindfold yet in faith
 Past each rock and dazzling wraith,
 Where the Sirens on the shore
 Sing deceiving evermore—
 Where, beside the shining shells,
 Circè sits and weaves her spells—
 Till we passed, beyond the mist,
 To the Throne of Amethyst.
 They were holy,
 And with moly
 Stayed and fed us,
 As they led us

* ἀθανασία.

† Thought, *pensée*.

Out of errors
 Past the terrors
 Of the Lion
 Hard by Sion,
 And the fateful
 Serpent wakeful,
 And the Giant
 Dark defiant,
 And the Raven
 To our Haven,
 And the summits in the splendour
 Where they nod,
 In the Silence great and tender
 Which is God.

There we sweetly bathed,
 And were all enswathed
 In the saving light
 Of the solemn Sight.
 And the Wisdom sure
 Made us very pure,
 Washed away the mean
 And what was unclean,
 Clothed us inward quite
 Beautiful and white.
 There we dropt the flesh,
 Rising fair and fresh
 Yet again to be
 From that sunny sea,
 Where the summits nod,
 Bathing us in God.

Thus in dying and denying did we find our better selves,
 Not by straining and the gaining but to fill up golden shelves,
 As the miser who unwiser heaps and hoards for others all,
 Though his trouble he redouble and the riches come at call;
 Out of losses and on crosses we arose to higher things,
 Tribulation's coronations made us more than any kings,
 Sacrifices of our vices gave us an undreamed of wealth,
 And through tender life's surrender yet we lived in brothers'
 health;

Till the stages writ in pages torn from an enduring part,
 Led us slowly, led us lowly, by a way unknown to Art,
 Through the labour that is neighbour unto everything with
 breath,

To the gladness that of sadness born is perfected by death.

Thus did we come boldly back
 To the conquered sin,
 Having peace within,
 Strewing roses on the track
 Of the ruin and the wrack,
 Whence all wrongs begin.
 Knowing men were soiled and such,
 Knowing men were weak,
 Why on frailty wreak
 Wrath and steal the cripple's crutch,
 And be righteous overmuch,
 Or in judgment speak?
 So we made a path of pity
 Through the dreadful deeps
 Of the lost and sunken city
 Which for ever weeps,
 Whilst the shadow creeps
 Closer like a gravecloth gritty
 Over foolish men and witty—
 Where no mourner sleeps,
 But with sad and sombre ditty
 Lonely vigil keeps.
 And we lit the Lamp whose shining
 Never can go out,
 And in its serene entwining
 Gilds the beggar's clout,
 Drives away the doubt,
 And with wonderful refining
 Stays the infamous maligning
 And the ribald shout,
 Or on lips of dark designing
 Bids red cherries pout.
 Spending still and freely spent

On in gentle ways we went,
Bearing and forbearing yet,
Glad to pardon and forget,
Giving here a happy look,
Leaving there some holy book,
Granting always of our best
Whether food or flower or rest,
Knitting love with baby socks,
Hailing kings in vulgar smocks,
Quick with sweet compassion's oil,
Slow where angry waters boil,
Shutting nothing out but hate
From our hospitable gate,
Fearing nothing—fire or sword,
Devils' ire or dungeon cord,
Judas kiss or killing pain—
But the sin that leaves a stain,
Fain to let the meanest live
Or the blackest debt forgive,
And for all one tender touch—
Why be righteous overmuch?

On our journey,
In the tourney,
While we lingered
Yet and fingered
Dusky tresses
In recesses
Hushed and hidden
And forbidden
All, save only
For the lonely—
When we hastened
Or were chastened
By affliction's
Benedictions,
Laughing, weeping,
Waking, sleeping,
Teaching, jesting,

Toiling, resting,—
 In the kindness
 Done to blindness,
 On our sorrow
 For the morrow
 With its certain
 Final curtain,
 On the mountain, through the mist,
 Shone the holy Amethyst.
 We have passed above the surges seething yet
 In their prison,
 And arisen
 To the heights of hope where suns may never set ;
 Though we move among the millions as they slave,
 Strive and stumble,
 Proud or humble,
 To their grandeur or dishonour and the grave.
 We have toiled ourselves and to the curse that clung
 Set the shoulder,
 Waxing older,
 In the awful wisdom that through fire makes young.
 We have stooped beneath the burden as it fell
 On another,
 Yet a brother,
 And redeemed him from the very hold of hell ;
 While we bore on our own bosom smarting still
 All the anger
 And the languor
 Treasured in the black and blasted stores of Ill.
 For we dared to cross the limit
 Shutting round our mortal state,
 Struggling up—though fear would dim it—
 To a nobler form and fate ;
 Forward, where the Serpent hisses,
 Past each crumbling rock and ledge,
 Over flower—concealed abysses,
 On the Sword of naked edge ;
 Though the powers of Darkness met us,

And the hands of Darkness dread
With their snares and baits beset us,
And enticed us to the dead.
Turning a new page
Of our pilgrimage,
With the solemn look
Of some blessed book,
We upon it bent
Glances reverent,
And therein we saw
Writ the larger law
Of the wondrous things,
Men august as kings
In the coming years,
Through atoning tears ;
Humbly there we read,
As around the head
Of a saintly soul
Shines an aureole,
Lofty truths to be
In the ages free,
When collective will
Working mine and mill,
Dealing out the land
With impartial hand,
Guiding every trade
Under shine and shade,
Moulding minds as clay
To a better way,
Should with justice teach
Equal rights to each.
Science purged of passion through the nations
Moved with gentler, kinder tone,
And from every stock and stone,
With the magic of its ministrations,
Drew the rapture and the revelations
Which belonged to each alone,
And on each bestowed new consecrations

Till it seemed God's very throne.
 Science linked with faith lit up the alleys
 Of the sinning slaving town,
 Where the drudges starve or drown,
 And despair with ruin hourly dallies,
 Or from crime to crime in silence sallies,
 Dreadful as a dead man's frown ;
 It breathed freshness of the hills and valleys,
 And the Pariah gave a crown.
 Science solved the riddle of the ages,
 Armed with love's resistless might
 And its beatific sight,
 Calmed the questions and the idle rages
 Of the force that fights for bloody wages
 With a vision of the right,
 Rolling earth down rainbow-covered stages
 To a future lost in light.
 We have looked and we have listened
 For the tidings, till they came
 Out of shadow, out of shame,
 While the dearth with promise glistened.
 We have carried on the message,
 Hung it like a fiery torch
 In the jail and brothel porch,
 With its wide and wondrous presage.
 We have with all danger striven,
 Though it never fell on us,
 And the beasts of Ephesus
 Tamed and maimed before us driven.
 Men and beasts,
 Fights and feasts,
 Tears and smiles,
 Words and wiles,
 Work and play,
 Night and day,
 All conspired with peace and passion
 Us on every forge to fashion,
 Till the sword and sharper pen
 Wrote "Amen".

Now the world is waxing bolder,
 And upon the sunny foreheads of the great and gifted Few
 Looking over Shakespeare's shoulder,
 Falls the light of larger ages which shall yet the earth renew ;
 Now the younger ransomed nations,
 Rising to the full dimensions of their heritage and due,
 Seek in fairer fields salvation's
 Circle, not in deadly drudging, and a brighter path pursue.
 For the truths that never vary,
 Though the views and passing visions of the passing times
 turn old,
 To Thy Face, O Son of Mary,
 Looking, over all the lustres, they the Amethyst behold ;
 And they find in beauty's culture
 Strength, and joy, and grace, and triumph, and the treasures
 of the Rest,
 Which defies the cruel vulture
 Feeding on the fettered serf and tearing at his tortured
 breast.

We have come in reverent asking
 That alone gives eyes to see,
 And have stept behind the masking
 To the Wisdom that makes free.
 We have seen, and we are victors
 Over suffering and shame,
 Over false reproach and blame
 And the *fasces* of the *lictors*,
 Over all the dark afflictors
 Proved but terrors of a name.
 For we mark beyond the shadow,
 Like a mist upon a meadow
 Hiding all the brooks and flowers
 And the birds in happy bowers—
 Mark beneath the tears and trying
 And the agony of dying,
 In the winter promise vernal,
 On the slave a crown eternal.
 We have conquered, and *Amavi*

Has expunged the old *Peccavi*,
 And through blood and fiery dew
 Of a high and holy *chrisma*,
 In a fiercer fresh *baptisma*
 The dead earth is born anew.
 Men are gods, and white virginity
 Is a tender true Divinity,
 Which shall bring a better time
 With a more than Christmas chime,
 Opening out into infinity
 With enfranchised souls sublime.
 Lo! the goddess in the maiden,
 If with sin and sorrow laden,
 On a throne of glorious ken ;
 And a thousand angels thunder
 From the ransomed worlds of wonder,
Janua vitæ mors. Amen.
 God is beauty,
 God is duty,
 And all Heaven is in the clod ;
 And the mortal
 Is the portal
 Which reveals the man as God.
 Though He slay me,
 I will stay me
 On the eternal rock of trust ;
 If the evil
 God be Devil,
 I will love because I must.
 Till the better
 Life its fetter
 Breaks and bursts in flower above,
 Ever hiving
 More, and striving
 Under the blue sky of Love.
 Earth may rend its tie,
 Heaven in ashes lie,
 Or the world become a slaughter pen

Yet my Heart and I
Know we cannot die,
But to live for evermore. Amen.

EPILOGUE.

Great with the treasures of Time
Comes the Desire of the years,
Man with his work sublime,
Woman redeemed through tears
Fair with her voice's chime,
Wonderful, born of fears ;
Rich in the solemn right
Wrung from the conquered doom,
Seeing with inward light
Windows in earthly gloom,
Opening broad and bright
Infinite rest and room.
White are their royal feet
Washed from the clinging mire,
Whiter the hands that meet
Wedded in one desire,
Whitest the hearts and sweet
Burning with holy fire ;
Strong in the wisdom bought
Dearly through stains and strife,
Roughly on anvils wrought,
Fashioned with flame and knife,
Orbed to the perfect thought
Blooming in perfect life.
Godlike they come, the dearth
Bursts into bud and dew,
Glad the enfranchised earth
Knowing her cares are few
Laughs with a giant mirth,
Called to a bridal new.
Happy their eyes, their hands

Pour the divinest dowers
Freely, their fond commands
Give to the dying powers,
Under their steps the lands
Break in a foam of flowers.
Ah, they have listened long,
Knelt at the awful Gate
Trusting, and caught the song
Sung for regret too late,
Love, which has vanquished wrong
Master of hell and fate.
Yes, they beheld the Sight,
Drunk in the Vision true
Veiled behind bars of night,
Higher than mortals sue,
Arming with better might
Souls that seek others' due.
Cleansed with their offered blood
Shed for a wider plan,
Turning to gold the mud,
Turning to Godhead man,
Bathed in the sacred flood
Flowing since Time began.
Ah! they have heard and seen,
Ah! they have felt, and know
All that has grimly been
Under the hues and glow
Making the earth so green,
All the despair below.
Now with their larger lore
Clearly they read the tale
Writ on the silver shore,
Sighed in the savage gale,
Hid with the buried ore,
Sobbed by the violet vale.
Oh! they believe and live
Deep in the hearts of all,
Out of their fulness give

Sorrow and soothe its call,
Not with a fugitive
Grace that must ever fall.
Theirs is the guiding clue,
Told by a treasured glove,
Smiling in heavenly blue,
Cooed by the mating dove,
Breathing in rose and rue—
Living (through dying) Love.

SECTION III.

"*THE PILGRIM OF ETERNITY.*"

(SHELLEY.)

I.

No banner waved, no trumpet blew
Its message from the mouldering wall,
No beacon flared, and no one knew
The knell had rung of Empire's fall;
And no one answered to the call,

Which round the hoary ruin flew;
Where stood a Pilgrim sad and solemn,
Himself a gnarled and wrinkled column;

Scarred by the lightning, pale and lone,
A sunset glory on his face,

As stiffened into breathing stone,
The last of his imperial race.

2.

Who cared, if the lorn hunted Jew
Was starved and hounded from the lands,
That drank his revelation's dew?

They burst their superstitions' bands,
By *him* who owned the ruler's hands,

And moulded the wide world anew;
He called God from His awful distance,
And then was blotted from existence;

'Twas *he* who with his mighty faith
Created the high Heaven of Love,

Gave form and substance to a wraith
And drew the fire from founts above.

3.

Who knew that now this regal race,
Which had enriched with graves the sod
Of every people in each place,
Bearing for all the penal rod,
And almost had discovered God,
Was gone and hardly left a trace?
Save where its burning holy passion,
Taught better times a fairer fashion;
For it had sunk with savage pains
Down to the basest lowest leas,
And struck through deathless history strains
Its dirge of terrible degrees.

4.

And here this strange unearthly man,
Firm in his sole sufficient might,
Stood, under universal ban;
As if he would in conscious right
Men and his Maker singly fight,
With sword of no unequal plan;
Some thought that, sweet as angel singing,
Woke hidden spheres to bright beginning;
Some wish, so beautiful and dread
It made the feeblest nature strong,
And raised the spirits from the dead
Or swayed the world with echoing song.

5.

A figure scarcely human he,
Cast in an older vaster form
And with a fallen beauty free;
As meant to ride a rebel storm
And frozen hearts with purpose warm,
Or other larger visions see;
As wrought to suffer more than reason,
For every time and not one season;

As born with many a mystic throe
To battle on with lust and pelf
And be the everlasting foe
Of God and all, and of himself.

6.

His look was proud, untamed by ill,
He shot his fiery glances far
On desert bare and blasted hill ;
As if he spurned the fleshly bar
That stayed him from the kindred star,
An exile but a conqueror still ;
He gazed on earth, he gazed on heaven
That travailed with its thunder leaven—
That wrapped him in its shadowy robe
And flung abroad a flaming ring ;
He trod in triumph on the globe,
That groaned and trembled at its king.

7.

Behind him crept the cruel night,
Before him fled the dying day ;
And clouds in the uncertain light,
Like ghosts that took their tortured way
With sheeted forms and garments gray,
Loomed dim and dreadful on the sight ;
But in the storm he stood, a giant,
Hewn out of rock, with front defiant ;
Although he bare the bitter load
Of dark insufferable years,
And long had walked the weary road
Wet with a mighty nation's tears.

8.

Lo, scarlet flowers he would not cull
Flashed from a skeleton's grim side,
And out of eyeless sockets dull ;
The bones were scattered bleached and wide

About him, as in rugged pride
 His foot he planted on the skull ;
 Above him, at the broken portal
 Stared forth a face in calm immortal ;
 The vulture, in its crumbling tower,
 Bent down on curst dethronèd Bel
 And the last heir of greater Power,
 That solitary sentinel.

9.

The rolling space, the boundless air,
 The might of the tempestuous sea,
 Had wrought his spirit free and fair
 And verdant as some deathless lea ;
 They gave the indomitable plea,
 Which scaled the highest heavenly stair ;
 And, woven with his inmost being,
 They dowered his faith with more than seeing ;
 The fever of the battle strife
 And peace of holy hands that bless,
 Had poured into his looks and life
 The wonder of the wilderness.

10.

He heard the happy waters chime,
 Upon the shining golden shore ;
 Where, above reach of care and crime,
 They wash as they have washed before,
 And make a murmur evermore,
 Beyond the troubles of all time ;
 Last of the grand old prophet order,
 He stood just at his Canaan's border ;
 The systemed orbs might feel decay,
 But he could never faint or fly,
 Who was (though each world passed away)
 A portion of eternity.

11.

“ God of my fathers,” then he cried,
 “ I lift my equal prayer to Thee ;

I have the hostile earth defied
 And kept my spirit pure and free,
 Though oft Thy Presence none could see,
 And many fell and faith denied;
 I bowed not, if I served Thy sentence,
 And wrought in fire my fierce repentance;
 In memory of the dreadful deed,
 The first black flower of bloody strife,
 Which shut me in a doom decreed
 And gave me damned and endless life.

12.

"Preserver, I may get no grave—
 I whom the Deluge could not drown
 And Thou didst in Thy wisdom save,
 To wear this wan and cursèd crown
 That is my shame and my renown;
 I envy still the murdered slave;
 Thou drovest me to a far shelter,
 Beyond the watery rage and welter;
 I might not bury in the deep
 That vengeance written in the sky,
 I could not even escape in sleep
 My evil immortality.

13.

"Terrible God, I tried each art
 To comfort me in wanderings wide,
 Though yet of every ill a part;
 While to myself I hugged the pride
 That kindled, in my world aside,
 The terrors of a haunted heart;
 High on my forehead flared the branding,
 Burnt in with fire by Thy commanding;
 I vainly bent to scathe and loss,
 Despoiled of all but that one mark,
 The ineradicable cross,
 Which daily grew more grim and dark.

14.

“Destroyer, none could see the sign
But Cain, in guilt’s remorseful throe;
Though all men knew I was malign,
And separated unto woe;
They felt I was the general foe,
Outside the pale of things benign;
In secret worlds and worlds external,
I saw and loathed the light infernal;
’Twas blazoned on the heavens at noon,
And in the midnight it was there,
It dimmed the magic of the moon,
I saw it threatening everywhere.

15.

“Dread Unity, my cross of sin
Seemed scribbled as by demon art
In meadow brook, on mountain whin,
In mazes of the roaring mart;
Engraven always on my heart
It shadowed out the wrath within;
Aye, in the sleep of tortured vision,
It followed me with dire derision;
Upon each stock, upon each stone,
In refuges that would not hide,
I saw the accusing mark alone,
Around, above, on every side.

16.

“Maker of evil, grave and gloom,
I strove a myriad ways to burst
This boundless life that yet lacked room,
As far as desperate mortal durst,
Shut in, a leprous thing accurst,
To unimaginable doom;
I braved the spear, the axe, the halter,
And fuel was to Moloch’s altar;

But no deliverance was to be,
I could not break the fatal tie ;
For from myself I might not flee,
And I should never never die.

17.

"Relentless One, I sought the sea,
There to inter my ceaseless crime ;
But ocean only mocked my plea,
And cast me forth as filthy slime
Upon the ghastly glare of Time,
To find no sheltering vale or lea ;
I got no wound from poisoned arrows,
Nor beneath torture's red-hot harrows ;
Wild beasts and wilder men in fright
Turned from my presence, when I came ;
I seemed to breathe a deadly blight,
The shadow of my lasting shame.

18.

"Sole and Serene, Rest of the saint,
I wooed the desert, wooed the town,
Where men in iron forges faint,
And smoke with sullen knitted frown
Lets not one loving ray come down ;
But neither heard my heart's complaint ;
Though the dire word could scarce be spoken,
And speaking had its vessel broken ;
And when, defying every law,
I pushed beyond the charts of men
And all things living, there I saw
My sorrow waiting for me *then*.

19.

"Great Architect, I temples built
To hide my blot and naked need ;
I only saw the red blood spilt,

The inextinguishable deed
 And wounds that opened but to bleed ;
 I knew the irreparable guilt ;
 I asked the eve, I asked the morning,
 Alike they turned from me with scorning ;
 By night I felt the lurid shape,
 By day I marked the present sin,
 I could not from myself escape,
 The fear I fled from lay within."

20.

*He spoke, and issued out of Space
 Expanding into splendid flower,
 A Child of more than human grace
 And breathing more than earthly power,
 With all Divinity for dower ;
 Eternity was in His face ;
 Love, flowing from each gentle gesture,
 Held forth His own white royal vesture ;
 Compassion shone in every look ;
 And through His tears in mercy smil'd
 Upon that life's blurred, ghastly book,
 The Holy, the Eternal Child.*

21.

*Cain heeded not the tender call,
 But fixed his glances on the ground,
 And clung more tightly to the pall
 Of horror wherein he was wound ;
 He would not, could not, be unbound,
 He loved to feel his fetters gall ;
 Though earth to its foundation shuddered,
 At that dark soul swept on unruddered ;
 He still disdained the blessed gift
 Of pardon for his erring way
 Through homeless worlds, and hope's blue rift
 That pointed to the endless Day.*

22.

"Thou stern Pursuer, whom I fear
And love with love akin to hate,
To fly and follow year by year,
And worship early and weep late;
I knock and knock at Mercy's gate,
An outcast from Thee, yet so near;
I needed not the Rabbins' College,
Who tasted of the Tree of Knowledge;
But all my learning cannot blunt
The point of conscience with its knife,
For I (whom pangs for ever hunt)
Have eaten, too, the Tree of Life.

23.

"O Blessed One, whom I would curse,
But am constrained instead to bless,
My deed was black, the meaning worse,
And more than mortal words express;
My bosom bears, without redress,
Its centuried grief—as on a hearse;
I sought to quench, in my mad sinning,
The human at its fair beginning;
I meant to wipe from every place
Creation's crown, in my fell pride,
To mock Thee with the murdered race
And cheat Thee then with suicide.

24.

"Omniscient, I, whose heart is rent
Now with the torments of the lost,
Who have all hell within me pent
On waves of hopeless passion tost,
Disdained to count the dreadful cost,
With one poor victim not content;
I would blot out, in his fresh glory,
Man at the starting of his story;

The heaven was callous to my call,
 It spurned my gift of humble price,
 And so I offered man and all—
 A braver, bloodier sacrifice.

25.

“Omnipotent, I scorn to plead
 The malice of a Devil’s ire ;
 Who did betray my soul and lead
 Unto the monstrous pit of mire,
 And gat my soul for damnèd hire—
 That ignorance might some pity read ;
 Why should I sink to cowards’ level,
 Who was myself my own dark Devil ?
 Now comes no respite for these pangs
 Beneath the surf, below the ground ;
 Thy furies with their cruel fangs
 My flying heart for ever hound.

26.

“Thou Omnipresent One, the blow
 That slew a brother and would slay
 And would all human kind lay low,
 Was struck at Thy most righteous way
 And Thee in that unclouded day,
 Whence our sweet streams of blessing flow ;
 Infatuate, I dreamed my malice
 Could drink of Thee its venomèd chalice ;
 But, though inspired with the dark pledge
 Which nought but murder’s breast could hold,
 It missed and with a sharper edge
 Recoiled on me a hundredfold.

27.

“O Wisdom, I, who crossed the bound
 Where boldest eyes with awe grow dim,
 And dared to tread that solemn ground

Which blasts the foot of idle whim—
 Who passed the sleepless Cherubim,
 In Thee a dreder knowledge found;
 For, when I plucked the flame-girt treasure,
 I hungered for a vaster pleasure;
 Thy retribution, in the heat
 Of pride's intoxicating breath,
 Bade me of richer banquet eat
 And live for ever living death.

28.

"Great God, my senseless passion smote
 Thee in Thy Honour's noblest grace—
 In the warm Love that widening wrote
 Its characters throughout all space,
 And shone most brightly in man's face
 That bore in gloom Thy perfect note;
 And thus it fouled the very fountains,
 The Right like seas, the Truth like mountains;
 And forth that changeless fiat went
 Which drove me to a desert dearth,
 Beneath a heaven in judgment bent,
 An exile in a homeless earth.

29.

"Lord, yet I grimly hug these chains
 And bless the bondage of my lot;
 I revel in the biting pains,
 And probe with joy each loathsome spot,
 Which ripens in me but to rot
 And every star I look at stains;
 It casts on sunny stream or meadow,
 The horror of its corpse-like shadow;
 And if despair and ghostly doubt
 Take form and body out my sin,
 Thy torturers lashing me without,
 I lash them fiercer yet within.

30.

“Almighty One, the Lord of Hosts,
With hierarchies in Thy train
Passing the sands on all our coasts,
Of blessed privilege in pain
And buffets I do not complain,
Nor sins that haunt like unlaid ghosts ;
I am the clay, Thou art the Potter,
And Thou may'st heat the furnace hotter ;
For nought could shake the conquering trust
That gives my lot its single sweet,
If I were only but the dust
Beneath the passage of Thy Feet.

31.

“Eternal Rock, on Whom we stand,
The Hope of each attempt and age,
Who holdest nations in Thy Hand,
That for a moment cross the stage
And idly sport or idly rage,
Thou art the Light of every land ;
Should earthly dreams this bosom cherish,
I care not if they pass and perish ;
Away with empty gauds and gold,
The fleeting breath that fools call fame
And beauty that so soon turns old,
If Thou abidest yet the same.

32.

“Thou Sun and Shield, my awful fate
Is little to the hearts that know
The Mercy of the Sworded Gate,
Beyond which living fountains flow
And fragrant airs of Eden blow,
Which opens though it opens late ;
I had my sin, I have my sorrow,
I ask not for a brighter morrow ;

The humble hearts that love Thee well
And bare the tempest of Thine ire,
Come to their knowledge out of hell
And climb to Heaven through burning fire.

33.

"O Sanctifier, Time is good
Herein to the poor maddened mind,
That else in endless torture stood
Pursuing what it could not find ;
Its touch is healing, it is kind
As the first kiss of maidenhood ;
My woes are now my very tissue,
Bone of my bone, my aim and issue ;
And from the grinding forge of grief
That shapes me as a shattered toy,
I draw a passionate relief,
I wrest an agony of joy.

34.

"Moulder of men, I would not change
The leprous blighting of my lot,
For peace or pleasure new and strange
Without the burden of the blot,
Which is my comfort and is not,
The one companion as I range ;
It is my doom, it is my nature,
My bliss, my bar of judicature ;
A lesser life were tame and cold,
To this in horror yet I clung,
Which made my spirit sad and old
And keeps me still for ever young.

35.

"Jehovah, Name I fear to speak,
Yet unto Thee I lowly call,
Because I am so vile and weak,

And each step is a broken fall
 Toward Thee, my Author and my All,
 On whom my foes their fury wreak;
 For every fall is up, and prison
 A ground of glory for the risen;
 My purpose in its woe heldt out,
 Though crushed by torture's iron glove;
 I saw the chastening was throughout,
 The measure of Thy mighty Love.

36.

“Dear Despot, yet my fearful Choice,
 I own Thee, and my feeblest nerve
 Vibrates to Thy most subtle Voice;
 And when my footsteps wildly swerve
 The farthest off, they fain would serve
 Thee and in Thee alone rejoice;
 I clasp Thy kindness in rejection,
 And hate is hallowed with affection;
 Whom could this solitary heart
 Seek with the sorrows it would tell,
 Save Thee who in Thy greatness art
 So sweet and unapproachable?”

37.

“Fair Paradox, to Thy vast Deep
 I track this dim divided will
 Which mocking shadows casts, that creep
 Confusing good alike and ill,
 Mephitic marsh and holy hill,
 Like visions of a fevered sleep;
 The same seem blessings and afflictions,
 Thou Sum of all our contradictions;
 For now I see no boundary line
 Betwixt the fat and mildewed ears,
 The human melts in the Divine,
 And every joy is crowned with tears.

38.

"My Father, in the unmapped range
Of Thy compassion's boundless fold,
Where oldest things are new and strange
And newest things Divinely old,
I mark but one abiding mould
Amid the flux of endless change ;
For I have loved Thee long and only,
And *therefore* I am lost and lonely ;
I learn the vessels of Thy choice
Have had the suffering as their due,
Because they hated evil's voice
And were to Thee in trial true.

39.

"All-Strange, in the dark rolling years
The sorrow was my only mate ;
I had no promise but of fears,
In this distorted twilight state,
Till love grew grimly out of hate ;
I knew no pillow save Thy spears ;
Mocked with dim doubtful simulations,
Warped was my mind to its foundations ;
The Evil an enchanter stood
Beautiful ever at my call,
And the disked and downcast Good
Gloomed forth the gravest ill of all.

40.

"Thou Secret One, the bitter cup
To me at length was passing sweet ;
The midnight with its mask rose up,
A radiance that I craved to greet ;
When famine stayed my stumbling feet,
With very Gods I seemed to sup ;
Misgivings waxed like sunshine certain,
And truth was hid in horror's curtain ;

I courted wounds and weary thirst
 Or clung to any transient toy,
 I hated what I loved at first
 And sadness was my sweetest joy."

41.

*He spoke, and from the cloven cloud
 Whose climbing bastions propt the sky,
 As echo to that challenge proud
 Came an exceeding bitter cry ;
 Wrung from a God in agony
 Wrapt in Creation's funeral shroud ;
 Heaven opened with an awful spasm
 And a great Cross bestrode the chasm ;
 While calm, amid the rising storm
 And in His crowned and conquered stress,
 Hung a most fair and wondrous Form
 With piercèd Hands that strove to bless.*

42.

*Cain turned him from the pleading Face,
 And closer fiercer drew around
 The mantle of his Pride, that Space
 Had swept and yet no Saviour found—
 That spurned submission and its bound,
 Content to keep a demon's grace ;
 Though thrice the shadowed earth was shaken,
 By that lone cry of Love forsaken ;
 But still, though thrice the Vision shook
 The heavens that fain on him would shine,
 He yielded not, he scorned to look
 Into those Human eyes Divine.*

43.

"Most Righteous Judge, I have been taught
 By temptings and resisted vice,
 That every noble thing and thought
 Is purchased at a heavy price,

Through death and sorer sacrifice,
 Ere into vital texture wrought ;
 Though sharp as nails came driven losses,
 I shrank not even from brothers' crosses ;
 For others I was glad to give,
 The offering of the dearest tie ;
 But, if he would arise and live,
 I knew the suffering soul must die.

44.

"O Refuge of the lost, the scourge
 Of generations and the scorn,
 And sorrows in their iron surge
 Whereby this evil heart was torn
 And into goodlier fashion born,
 I suffered still—that they might purge ;
 I welcomed every blast and billow,
 That harder made my stormy pillow ;
 It is not troubles that I fear,
 It is not any pang or grief
 That wakes in me the unwilling tear ;
 I do not seek a slave's relief.

45.

Stern Lord, not for myself one hour
 Would I a craven murmur lift ;
 Nor mourn if, in the fairest flower
 And in the brightest grace or gift,
 Has ever lurked some secret rift,
 To lay it low as Babel's Tower ;
 For he, who has the God-like guerdon,
 Must feel the fire and bear the burden ;
 The sentence of the outcast fate,
 The hate that hunts the outcast down,
 Are portions of a high estate
 And jewels in a kingly crown.

46.

“ Creator, I do here confess
I have deserved Thy utmost wrath,
Who dared so blackly to transgress
And wandered from the royal path ;
If thus, at length, some aftermath
Might bloom though in a wilderness ;
Though dying daily, racked and riven,
I ask not now to be forgiven ;
There is a sweetness in the dearth,
There is a rapture in the rod,
That drives me farther from the earth
And draws me nearer to my God.

47.

“ Fountain of Life, I censure not
(Who am but ashes in Thy sight)
The purpose which has shaped our lot
Through tears and tempests and the night,
To be the sovereign saving light
Of lands that had the Truth forgot ;
For when the sun of nations dwindled,
At our great faith it was rekindled ;
To stand on naked ramparts, lone,
A worn but sleepless sentinel,
And guard Thine undefended Throne,
Has been the pride of Israel.

48.

“ Author of all, I will not pine
To think that Empire now has set,
Which made the grandest peoples Thine ;
In which the rays of wisdom met,
Though in its ruins mighty yet ;
It showed, how man could be Divine ;
What if the glory has departed
From earth, and none is broken-hearted ?

What if to idols myriads bow
Who once Thine awful Temple trod,
And on the world's cold blighted brow
Is darkly written—"Ichabod" ?

49.

"Elohim, sworn to us as none
By solemn covenant and seal,
We shared Thy kingdom and were one
With Thee, to hallow and to heal
The nations and Thy truth reveal,
And in the marvels that were done ;
And I, who vainly courted dying,
Stood upon Sinai death defying ;
I was with Moses, when he saw
Thy dazzling presence on the height,
And lived to hear the sacred Law—
I in the shadow, he in light.

50.

"Great God, I heard the thunder sound,
The trumpet for the trysting blown,
The earthquake tear and toss the ground,
And felt these terrors were my own ;
While I was still a thing unknown,
Untouched within the flaming bound ;
I seemed the race, I drained the vial
Of wrath and love, in every trial ;
I came unharmed from each fierce test,
The dire eclipse, the battle shock
Of Nature's powers that would not rest,
Though stars might fall and mountains rock.

51.

"Bright Being, yet I praised the Will
That gave us only crowns of thorn,
A grand inheritance of ill,

8

To leave us trampled on and torn,
 The butt of every scathe and scorn ;
 They strengthened us, they could not kill ;
 For we to sadness were anointed,
 And thus we ruled for ends appointed ;
 And in our sanctuary walls
 We heard the awful armies meet,
 The surf of suffering worlds, that falls
 In crimson tears at Thy white Feet.

52.

“ Splendour, Thou madest light, and joy
 Sprang bubbling heavenward at Thy tread ;
 And earth seemed but a happy toy
 For man, in sparkling beauty spread ;
 And through it ran a golden thread,
 Thy Grace, that then was never coy ;
 And thus Thy might was always making
 New forms, that only come by breaking ;
 Space felt the moulding of Thy hand,
 And when Thy will the waters heard
 They blossomed in the smiling land,
 That rose refulgent at Thy word.

53.

“ O Lord of Life, Thou framedst Love,
 To riot in the veins of all,
 And set to song the mating dove
 Or hearts that to each other call,
 Though oceans bar and chaos fall ;
 It rules our storms and stars above ;
 For each a hope, a kindred greeting,
 For each with some one some time greeting ;
 But unaccompanied I went on
 By blessèd streams and bowers of spice,
 For me no woman's glamour shone,
 No woman's arms were Paradise.

54.

"El Shaddai, a helpless child,
A babe was once Thine Israel,
Lured to the brink of waters wild
By the red harlot Jezebel;
Without a guide or citadel,
Until Thy mercy on him smil'd;
Betwixt him and the fatal blossom,
Then Thou didst bare Thy glorious Bosom;
He saw Thee as in Horeb's mount,
When racked with thirst and throbbing pain,
And flying to the Living Fount
He drank and lived and drank again.

55.

"O Woman God, our Mother Blest
And blessing like the heavenly blue,
Above us bowed and breathing rest;
Though we refused Thee oft Thy due,
We ever found Thee tried and true,
With food and refuge on Thy Breast;
With broken bows and emptied quivers,
Strength we renewed at those deep rivers;
Refreshed we then rose up as kings,
And in our consecrated might
Once more went forth on eagle wings,
To conquer and to spread the light.

56.

"Most Bountiful, Thy Love came down
Like milk and honey in its dew,
And laid a more than royal crown
On all who of that plenty drew
Or did to Thee their love renew—
In darkness, like a dead man's frown;
Though the same Peace, that came in laughter,
Left blackened walls and smoking rafter;

And woe to rebel pride and power
 That fain would stem Thy righteous path,
 When over blasted town and tower
 Swept on Thy desolating Wrath.

57.

“O Beautiful and Best, I drank
 Some drops of that benignant Source ;
 It gave a grandeur and a rank
 Even to my dark and dreary course,
 And soothed its infinite remorse
 Wherein I sank and rose and sank ;
 And thus revived I could adventure,
 To bear Thy terrible indenture ;
 More home-like seemed the living hell
 And less the inexpiable woe,
 If I could seek that sacred well,
 My Life and my Eternal Foe.

58.

“Thou El Elyon, Father still ;
 For Thou art Father of the lost,
 And those that exiles unto ill
 Are tumbled by the winds and tost
 On waves which Love alone has crost,
 In the great wonder of Thy Will ;
 Though some would bow to Baäl rather,
 Yet all at last have but One Father ;
 Pale Ashtaroth her shining sham
 Before Thee stooped with palsied neck,
 Thou Lord of all, of Abraham,
 Ishmael and Melchizedek.

59.

“God of the Gentiles, from the first
 I knew and hated the fair hope,
 Which slaked that universal thirst

Of wanderers toiling up the slope
 Through darkness, if it yet might ope
 Some day and in bright blossom burst ;
 I knew that Thou wast always Human,
 And truly Man and more than Woman ;
 But, ah, I grudged the boundless grace,
 Which was not Israel's one lot
 And fell outside the chosen race ;
 If elsewhere shed, I prized it not.

60.

" O Thou Most High, a jealous rage
 Possessed my soul, that surely read
 In Thy broad Mercy's purest page
 The promise in its pity spread—
 My own one respite from the dead,
 My stay on this unending stage ;
 I saw, I see Thy hated blessing,
 Like a warm Hand the world caressing ;
 Gehenna feels a secret joy,
 The shadow of Thy sheltering Bliss,
 Which nothing there can quite destroy
 In the black heart of the Abyss.

61.

" Father, I would Thy love have kept
 In iron walls for just our land—
 For Israel, that toiled and wept,
 And fettered forged a stouter band
 With the stern stuff of Thy command,
 While priests were blind and princes slept ;
 I would have left to bits and bridles
 The dupes that made and worshipped idols ;
 That we might take a grander form
 In Thee enriched, with Thee allied,
 Against the world and every storm,
 And Thou in us be glorified."

62.

*He spoke, and by the levin's blade
Created and exceeding art,
Stept forth a Temple from the shade,
Complete in each proportioned part ;
And on an Altar lay a Heart,
A sacrifice no mortal made ;
A Heart of Fire for ever burning,
In love that did not know returning ;
And through the pillared porches ran
A prayer from that great Heart which pled,
And in its woe for exiled man
For ever burned, for ever bled.*

63.

*Cain hid his face with wrathful hand,
He would not see the accusing sight
That seared his bosom with a brand ;
If into his heart's rayless night,
It poured a moment Mercy's light
And eased the eating iron band ;
While on his brain, with ghastly stricture,
Was scorched that terrible red picture ;
But, though the refuge stood so near,
Its sanctuary he contemned,
And rushed upon the judgment spear,
Self-tortured still and self-condemned.*

64.

*“El Olam, God who hidden art
From sage, and sovereign, and the rich,
Thou hast in every age a part—
A place, Thy servants know in which ;
Thou buildest high a temple niche,
Within each pure and humble heart ;
O Lord of æons, what can sever
Thy servants' faith from Thee for ever ?*

Time writes an epitaph for all,
Except for me beneath Thy ban,
And on the bridal treads the pall;
Unchanged art Thou, unchanged Thy plan.

65.

"Eternal, I ten thousand gods
Have witnessed and ten thousand creeds;
They ruled and fooled with flimsy rods,
They were no more than bruised reeds,
Nor hearkened once to human needs,
And crumbled with the crumbling clods;
They were as fleeting as a bubble,
They served for fuel like the stubble;
They came in cruelty and lust
And wrought their evil hour of pain,
But now their memory is dust
And Thou the Ruler dost remain.

66.

"O God of Ages, the dim past
To Thee is as the present known;
And future times their shadows cast
About the intolerable Throne,
Where Thou art seated, calm, alone,
Judging as Thou shalt judge at last;
Earth is at best a melting vapour,
And heaven the twinkling of a taper;
But Thou hast led Thy people on
From clouded dawn to clearer Day,
And still Thy presence brighter shone
At every step, with every ray.

67.

"Thou Everlasting, in the rise
And fall of dynasties but One,
Amid the flux of lands and skies

And creatures doomed and fanes foredone
Or worlds emerging where was none,
Thou art the same in each disguise ;
Things come and go, man fails and falters
'Twixt fresh enchantments and fresh altars ;
But in the restless ebb and flow
Of many climes and cults at strife,
That flashed and fell as sparks below,
Thou hast the same unruffled Life.

68.

“ O King of Battles, Lord of Hosts,
Ten thousand times ten thousand bands
Of angels at their awful posts,
With thunder feet and lightning hands
Await the word of Thy commands,
To purge as chaff all idle boasts ;
What are the weapons then but water,
When Thou art girded for the slaughter ?
Our tools and triumphs feel at length
The fretting of the rust and moth,
But Thine is undecaying strength,
O dread Jehovah Sabaoth.

69.

“ Thou Man of War, Thou fighting Lord,
Before Thee failed the shield and spear ;
And broken was the victor sword
That scattered round it fire and fear
And left the laughing garden drear,
When Thou Thy judgment didst award ;
The stars strove for us in their courses,
Earthquake and tempest were our forces ;
For Thou didst captain us so well,
We mocked at wilderness and flood
And giants and the jaws of hell,
Baptised Thy sons in seas of blood.

70.

"Avenging One, the halls of Heth
At Thy consuming name grew dim,
And with the blasting of Thy breath
The tide rolled back on Mirzaim ;
And they who saw the Cherubim,
Beheld the unveiled brow of death ;
The storm for us a steadfast omen,
Hurled fierce destruction at our foemen ;
They heard Thy dreadful trumpets blow,
They needed not an arm to smite,
And fell the walls of Jericho
And fled the ravening Midianite.

71.

"Sole Conqueror, the sudden blaze
Of the Shechinah's blinding shroud,
Redemption to our reverent gaze,
Was night and ruin to the proud ;
And Thou, attired in glorious cloud,
Didst triumph in the world's amaze ;
The heavens above, the mountains under,
Before Thy chariot rent asunder ;
And, in Thy might, the broadest lands
We bowed and scattered as the straw ;
On nations, crushed by Thy commands,
We carved the letters of Thy Law.

72.

"Breastplate of Truth, while Israel
Faithful to Thee and to Thine aim,
Slept not on beds of asphodel,
He dared not that grand message maim ;
And all enkindled with Thy claim,
He spread and spread invincible ;
More swift than bow, more keen than lances,
The terrors of Thine ordinances ;

He wrote it legible and red
 In pages grim of gory strife,
 On fields of dying foes and dead,
 The stern old statute—'*life for life*'.

73.

"Thou Sword of Justice, we would stray
 From the bright circle of Thy Sun,
 And stumble on the treacherous way
 And the dear shrine of Duty shun;
 Till Mercy's final sands were run,
 And Thou hadst risen up to slay;
 We turned aside to cisterns broken,
 We would not see the saving token;
 Then we in vain our armies massed
 And then against us Thou didst fight;
 Victory from our banners passed
 To other lands, and down came night.

74.

"O Adonai, Lord of all
 And me, but not of me indeed,
 Who wander through this picture hall
 Of painted earth, by doom decreed,
 While ages ages still succeed,
 Yet farther though so near Thy call;
 We knew Thy Love was ever flowing,
 And felt its fire within us glowing;
 But deaf were we to Mercy's voice,
 Regardless of our plighted troth,
 And fixed our hearts with fatal choice
 On lewd and lovely Ashtaroth.

75.

"True Master, when the service came
 To bid the reverence due to Thee
 And the unutterable Name

Whereby we rose so fair and free,
 Our eyes were blind and would not see ;
 We offered Thee the sick and lame ;
 We heaped our own and heathen treasures
 And sold our souls for passing pleasures ;
 We crowded every evil shrine
 And entered at false idols' gate,
 We knelt to beings not Divine
 Thy Temple courts were desolate.

76.

“O Husband, title that I dare
 Hardly to frame with warped white lips,
 So faithful in thy ceaseless care
 For us beneath the Pharaoh's whips,
 Or under the extreme eclipse
 Of spoiling Medes that did not spare ;
 Yea, Thou didst save us from the lion,
 And bring her captives back to Zion ;
 But we were faithless to our bond,
 In base adulteries lightly led
 By foreign lords and lovers fond,
 We soiled the sacred marriage bed.

77.

“Dear Ruler of our House, and yet
 So dreadful to this hunted soul,
 How could we the One King forget
 Who took from us a petty dole,
 And giving Love gave us the whole,
 And with all Light our land beset ?
 For Thou to us wast food and clothing,
 And we repaid Thy gifts with loathing ;
 Yea, we dishonoured Thee and burned
 For easier ties and cheaper arms,
 And in our frantic folly turned
 To harlots nude and coarser charms.

78.

“Great Governor of earth and sky,
 And yet the Bridegroom of our race,
 Thou didst Thine awful rank deny,
 The heaven of heavens, to find us grace
 And make our hearts Thy dwelling-place,
 And fill with Thine eternity;
 But lust, that maddens whom it scorches,
 Fell on our hearts and dimmed our porches;
 We left Thy Temple white and calm
 And over nameless orgies cowered,
 Upon the hill, beneath the palm,
 A Bride dishonoured and deflowered.

79.

“O Sovereign Spouse, we wooed our fall,
 Who mocked Thy Sabbaths, though the beast
 That knew its owner and the stall
 Had led us to the holy feast;
 And we, so faithless in the least,
 Now drink the wormwood and the gall;
 Foul grew the priest and false the prophet,
 And fanned alike the flames of Tophet;
 We sought Thee latest in our need
 And glittering shadows lured us on,
 We trusted to the trembling reed
 Of Egypt or of Babylon.”

80.

*He spoke, and from the creeping gloom
 A deep and multitudinous sigh
 Fell, sadder than the trump of doom;
 It seemed to bring all Nature nigh,
 And all the passion bear on high,
 And in God's Bosom find it room;
 But, lo! once more the dusk was rended,
 And white wings through the dusk descended;*

*As if they gathered, in the light
Of un conjecturable Love,
All sins and sorrows of the night,
That fled before the Holy Dove.*

81.

*Cain heard not in his frantic speech,
Cain saw not that Infinite care
Which would the vilest soul beseech
And in its midmost anger spare,
Or death for any creature dare
And hottest hell in pity reach ;
No glimpse of peace, no gleam of pardon,
For him whom Love could only harden ;
His was the irrevocable choice,
He felt no Spirit and no spell,
He lifted louder yet his voice
In his great ire implacable.*

82.

*"Thou Providence, O stern and strange,
Ours was the empire of the heart ;
And when Thy blasting storms of change,
Or subtler foes of trade and art
Drove us on land and sea apart,
We found Thee in our farthest range ;
Rome had her fasces, and her lictors,
But we had God and we were victors :
Thy Temple sank in seas of blood
And fire on Zion's holy hill,
But faith came glorious from the flood,
And our proud conquerors conquered still.*

83.

*"Disposer of the ends, our arms
Survived the horror and the hate
Of ages and ten thousand harms,*

That shut us out from Mercy's gate
 With grim relentless iron fate,
 Till we grew dead to earth's alarms ;
 The eagle preyed upon the pigeon,
 But we were strong in Thy religion ;
 They starved and tortured us to doom,
 They laid our City in the dust,
 And mocked our maidens in their bloom,
 But could not shake our shadowed trust.

84.

“ Lord, still we ever dared to be
 Ourselves, and were not cringing slaves ;
 We carried Thy dread Law and Thee,
 Through persecution's foaming waves,
 To light at least our gloomy graves ;
 And thus, though fettered, were we free ;
 We drudged and bled for cruel masters,
 But worked with Thee in all disasters ;
 We knew we were a royal race
 And would not, with Thy blessed dower,
 Take the tame colour of the place
 Or wear the fashion of the hour.

85.

“ Adored, if others plucked the sheaf
 Our hands had garnered from the blight,
 To riot in their plunder brief,
 They did not cloud Thy saving sight ;
 And through the drearest densest night,
 We bore Thy sacred olive leaf ;
 The winds might rave and rise the ocean,
 They could not daunt our fixed devotion ;
 Thy chosen saints have oft turned pale,
 Plunged in the deep and unmapped dark,
 But we rode out the roughest gale
 Within the imperishable Ark.

86.

“One God, I mourn not empire fled,
Now weaker hands essay the task,
And trim Thine awful Lamp, that shed
Conviction on each lying mask
And gave what blinded souls would ask ;
Thou knowest all, and we have sped ;
The feeble flickering spark of Science,
Was kindled at our great reliance ;
What sages only guessed, we saw
Instructed in a better way,
Who preached Thy boundless Reign of Law,
Which opes all Heaven to those that pray.

87.

“High Teacher, yet we do not doubt
Or fear the issue of the end,
If our grand race is blotted out
Past even Omnipotence to mend—
The race that unveiled God as Friend,
In social time, in battle shout ;
Our worship was a feast of glory,
Our feast a sacramental story ;
And though we smitten are by death,
Our hope destruction could not kill,
And each with his last loyal breath—
Departed trusting in Thee still.

88.

“Unchanging One, we passed Thy Truth
A beaconing torch in pious hands,
Down ages that repaired their youth ;
They rose again, like burning brands,
In the broad Life of Thy commands,
Which clasped a Rahab and a Ruth ;
We proved in fire, O Thou Refiner,
That man was God and made Diviner ;

And thus we struck a deeper chord,
To show how infinite Thy plan
Revealed not to mere wit or sword—
God always was and will be Man.

89.

“ Deep Wellspring of the worlds, we knew
Down in Thy bountiful warm Breast
For ever lay that precious dew,
Humanity, though long at rest,
To overflow the last and best
Of all Thy works that worlds renew ;
For Thou art Man and Thou art Woman,
And in Thy Godhead grandly Human ;
We gave this treasure fresh from Thee,
And what could mortals greater give,
If they their triumph might not see ?
And, in our dying, yet we live.

90.

“ All-Wise, vain lore could find no space,
Though lashed by keen ascetic whips,
For knowledge old and common grace
Wide-wafted with our merchant ships,
A proverb upon children's lips,
A maxim of the market-place ;
The patriarch felt that strange affection,
The separate joy of Thine Election ;
And learning now has hardly caught
The text of lilies and the dove,
Some fragments of the mighty thought
Which is the shadow of Thy Love.

91.

“ All-Good, Thine individual ken,
And kindness counting even the hairs
Of every brow as lives of men,

And tempering the winter airs
 To creatures with no sheltering lairs,
 We taught by Inspiration's pen ;
 The suns that wake, the motes that slumber,
 Have each their special name and number ;
 And the same Father's care, that bowed
 In blessing over Israel,
 Took thought of oxen and allowed
 For every babe its Gabriel.

92.

" All-Great, we had but little store
 Of worldly wisdom, but we gave
 A rarer wit, a richer ore,
 Than learnèd fools that at Thee rave ;
 We taught the sovereign and the slave,
 To love, to wonder, to adore ;
 The nations had a dream or idol,
 We faith and Thee in tender Bridal ;
 We found the earth an empty toy,
 And left upon its every page
 An incommunicable joy,
 An undecaying heritage.

93.

" All-Holy, many are my pains
 And black the memories they bring,
 Nor soothed by wisdom's tardy gains ;
 But this the sharpest poisoned sting,
 That Thou art a dethronèd King
 And Christ the false Usurper reigns ;
 For millions now uplift the pæan,
 To that pale conquering Galilæan ;
 Let cowards serve Him, who have tried
 And tremble at a Peasant's nod,
 I will not own the Crucified,
 I will not serve a slavish God.

94.

“All-Merciful, we taught each time,
 With Thy prevailing sword of song
 And faith a shield for every clime
 Invincible in armed wrong—
 If ruling makes man brave and strong,
 Obedience builds him up sublime;
 But I will never stoop to follow,
 A leader but of visions hollow;
 When Jaël called we followed *her*,
 Queen Esther filled a worthy scene,
 But not the village Carpenter
 And not the shrinking Nazarene.

95.

“All-Pure, I cannot hail a lie,
 Though it should leave my sorrows less,
 And loose the adamantine tie
 Which links me to this corpse-like stress;
 And none Thy statute may transgress—
 “*The soul that sinneth it shall die;*”
 Shame has no shifting or condoning,
 Man measures out his own atoning;
 Each has his furnace for the dross,
 While none may bear a brother's load,
 Each must bend under his one cross
 And walk himself his suffering road.

96.

“All-Dread, I question not my doom,
 Nor feel the drawing of one lure;
 If oft I wrestle with the gloom
 And passion that no balm can cure,
 Who in my solitude endure;
 For Thee and me is boundless room;
 I looked down Sinai's burning crater,
 I felt its flame, but mine was greater;

Refreshed me Sodom's fiery rain,
I waxed when Rome the tyrant fell,
And though the judgment fell on Cain,
I am not Cain but Israel.

97.

Seen and Unseen, Thou knowest why
I watched the wan Pretender hang
On the red cross in agony,
Pierced by desertion's keener pang
And failure's dull corroding fang ;
I stood on bald stern Calvary ;
But I lived on, alone, unwilling,
For me no mercy came like killing ;
Eclipse and horror filled the air
And lightnings blasted root and stem,
Not me—nor hurt a single hair,
When low fell fair Jerusalem.

98.

"Revered, I could not worship One,
Who, while the land for freedom cried,
And gallant deeds might well be done,
Struck not a blow when sorely tried ;
For a poor metaphor he died,
And of his promise left us none ;
We were the butt of every nation,
Though the bright crown of Thy Creation ;
He offered us a realm of cloud.
The sceptre of the beaten slave,
The wrapping of a royal shroud,
The peace of ashes in the grave.

99.

"Most Wonderful, I will not frame
My acts to own an abject law
That makes the manly spirit tame

Nor will the sword of justice draw ;
 Its heroes are but stuff of straw,
 Its glory is a mocking shame ;
 Secure in my strong hate's reliance,
 I fling at him my set defiance ;
 His meekness can no grandeur give,
 That doles us water and a crust,
 I shall his kingdom long outlive
 And see his temples turn to dust.

100.

“ Unread One, records of the past
 Lie open to me as a book,
 And lurid rays of lightning cast
 Upon the future's darkest nook,
 As forward still my glances look ;
 The Christian nightmare will not last ;
 I see a surge of angry peoples,
 That thunder o'er the toppling steeples ;
 The empire has no pledge of life
 Which answers not one human need,
 Gives stones for bread and empty strife
 And bids its victims toil and bleed.

101.

“ O Light of lights, I see it now,
 I see his splendour waxing dim,
 Confusion on the Impostor's brow
 Before the masses gaunt and grim,
 That cheated sorely spurn at *him*
 Who only duped their frequent vow ;
 His power is doomed, his palace trembles,
 The prince is deaf, the priest dissembles ;
 His weakly rule shall now decay
 Before this iron purpose bend,
 If heaven and earth should pass away,
 And I defy him to the end.”

102.

*He spoke, and from the silence came
The shadow of a shining Form,
That was no shadow and not flame,
Though bathed in the deep burning storm ;
Life in its every breath was warm,
And shook and showed the rapturous frame ;
The limbs were like the mighty mountains,
And the great breasts like bubbling fountains ;
Full in Its naked beauty bright,
With all fair women s wedded grace
And in a sweetness more than sight,
It bent on Cain that maddening Face.*

103.

*Cain saw and trembled, and drew nigh
One step, and then again drew back ;
He lifted both his hands on high,
Red-writhen in the tempest wrack,
That down upon him bellied black
And caught the semblance of a sigh ;
But love, that would his weakness cozen,
Passed, in mid fire to hatred frozen ;
He scowled defiance at those lips
That breathed the pity of all time,
In agony of dread eclipse
And everlasting wrath sublime.*

104.

*" Beautiful Terror, in the night
I waited still year after year
For the Messiah's saving might ;
Delayed, though tear fell upon tear
And darker fear was joined to fear,
That cried for the avenging right ;
I stayed me on the killing letter,
My hope was blind, my faith a fetter ;*

I dreamed of earthly rule to be,
 And clothed with force a Soldier sent
 Redressing wrongs—but not for me,
 And beaming battle as he went.

105.

“Giver of Grace, I waited on
 And watched the human saviours set,
 Like moons that out of midnight shone;
 While the Redemption dawned not yet,
 In any Christ or Mahomet;
 They taught, they trembled, they were gone;
 For me I knew there was no morrow,
 No rest, no sun but that of sorrow;
 I stumbled on from age to age
 The cheated prey of idle chance,
 Through scenes unnumbered on one stage,
 In my dim groping ignorance.

106.

“Ineffable, he came at last,
 With power and beauty in his gift;
 Not on the tempest’s iron blast,
 Not with the lightning’s fierce red rift,
 In ruin all his foes to sift
 And under conquering footsteps cast;
 He came, he ruled, as Thine Anointed,
 He did the mighty work appointed;
 But not as even prophets deemed
 Who sang of slaughter’s vulgar charms,
 And vain deliverance that seemed
 Wrung from a hostile world in arms.

107.

“Thou Silent One, he came, he came,
 Though the dull nations knew not whence,
 Whom he and he alone could tame

And give a light and a defence—
 In the strange holy Influence,
 Which purged them like refining flame;
 And rude barbarians felt his moulding,
 The presence as of wings enfolding;
 The savage dropt his bloody knife,
 And prayed when that pure Spirit spoke;
 To a new nature and true life,
 Ransomed the proudest peoples woke.

108.

"Mysterious God, I do not care
 That mine and many a race has fled;
 If types that laid Thy beauty bare
 Shone out and then their blossom shed,
 And mingled with the myriads dead;
 For not a pattern wilt Thou spare;
 Things rise and fall, and nothing lingers,
 Worlds are but jewels on Thy Fingers;
 But I must carry in my breast
 One feature under each new sky,
 A will that cannot fade or rest,
 The curse of warped humanity.

109.

"Abiding One, I go, I go,
 The sport of any wind or wave
 And tossed a shuttle to and fro;
 Master of time, and yet its slave;
 Possessing all things, but a grave;
 While cosmic currents ebb and flow;
 New stars and hopes the heavens bedizen,
 I always see the same horizon;
 The shadow still is at my side
 Unchanged in every turn of chance,
 The inextinguishable pride
 My awful one inheritance.

110.

"Dark dreadful Life, I fly to Thee
 With this unbroken spirit yet;
 It knows the God it cannot see,
 And feeling will not own the fret
 Of bonds it never may forget;
 It is and is not blindly free;
 What if we had no crown but slaughter,
 And death has wedded Judah's daughter?
 What if no touch of Jewish hands,
 No gift of Jewish grace remains,
 To love and guide the helpless lands,
 If thus Thy Providence ordains?

111.

"Bright beauteous Death, from Thee I fly,
 I fly who still adore Thy Face;
 Which hides and only hastens by,
 And in its circuits throughout space
 Forbears on *me* to leave a trace,
 And when I call makes no reply;
 Shall pardon for the dire transgression,
 Be bought by stooping to confession?
 I sinned, I sinned, as others now,
 For vengeance, not for power or pelf;
 But if to Thee all beings bow,
 I will not, while I am myself.

112.

"Inscrutable, I would not grieve,
 For the mad onslaught on my kin;
 Because they still could not believe
 In cheap salvation they deemed sin,
 And the false heaven that Christians win,
 Nor sought the refuge of reprieve;
 When millions, to our execution
 Marched, with the Impostor's absolution;

When all the peoples in their rage
Rose up against the outcast Jews,
And dealt them out a bloody stage,
A blacker St. Bartholomew's.

113.

"O Infinite, no crownèd fool
Can banish quite our beacon star,
Which guides all lands and every school;
Although he be that creeping scar
Upon the nations, called the Tsar;
Our spirit is no tyrant's tool;
And, not as saints on dusty niches,
It lives and the whole earth enriches;
And it shall last in conquering trust,
When even Time's gray portals close,
When despots with their frantic lust
Return to dirt from which they rose.

114.

"Lord, bitter years have come and gone,
And kingdoms have been swept away
That once led mighty peoples on
In arts and arms' superb array;
The globe itself has felt decay,
While suns are dead that brightly shone;
But I, the shadow of their glory,
Endure and witness to their story;
For, though discrownèd from their place
The nations all in ashes lie,
I live sole remnant of my race,
And know that I shall never die.

115.

"O Changeless One, these eyes have seen
New earth and heavens, through purging pain,
Veil over the old blue and green;

They were a fleeting stir or stain,
 And passed to be renewed again,
 As if no worlds before had been ;
 New sheep-bells in the sheep-folds tinkled,
 Old stars were quenched and new stars twinkled ;
 It mattered not if bell or star,
 Alike they came, alike they went,
 Beyond the silence and the bar
 That covers beast or continent.

116.

“ Resistless Power, the empires rose
 And fluttered for a space and fell ;
 Each had its frolic and its close,
 An eddy on the ocean swell ;
 Now they are nought, and it is well,
 And the wild fever earns repose ;
 Amid the wreck of things forsaken,
 I journey on, I am unshaken ;
 But in the ruins, as they fall
 Like broken waves upon the beach,
 I see my fatal sin in all,
 I feel my damnèd self in each.”

117.

The brightness faded from his brow,
 But not the passion in his breast,
 Inspiring that eternal vow
 Which still forbade the thought of rest ;
 Though he was faint and over-prest
 With ages' weight, he would not bow ;
 If long and sore his soul repented,
 His will to God's had not consented ;
 The heaven shrank to one ghastly frown,
 The old earth shuddered and then stopt,
 With moaning winds the sun went down,
 And like a curse the darkness dropt.

118.

A few more stifled words of hate
 Burst from those daring lips of sin ;
 He stood outside the golden gate,
 And the dear God who is our Kin ;
 Alas ! he would not enter in ;
 And now returning was too late ;
 The universe and all might perish,
 Ere he his madness ceased to cherish ;
 He fronted with his impious plan
 (Though single-handed) earth and sky,
 Defying God Himself and man,
 "The pilgrim of eternity".

119.

He spoke, and flung his garment round
 The radiance of his hoary head ;
 While crimson lightnings fawned and wound
 An awful carpet for his tread,
 Upon a royal pathway spread,
 And roofed with thunder's solemn sound ;
 At war with God, and man, and Nature,
 Himself he rose to Godlike stature ;
 The subject earth was still his throne,
 His settled purpose gave him light,
 And in his courage strong, alone,
 He passed into the fire and night.

120.

And, lo ! the terror of a Sword
 Upon no earthly anvil made,
 As though all flames were in it stor'd,
 And the dread hour of judgment bade !
 It burst the blackest heart of shade,
 It gave the final fixed award ;
 Creation seemed to groan and sicken,
 By a grim sudden death-wound stricken ;

And forth from heaven, that seemed to fail
Beneath the woe that through it trod,
Went up the broken-hearted wail
Of a despised departing God.

SECTION IV.

WINGS.

MY CICELY.

Pure and pensive Cicely,
Tell me, daughter, tell me why
Lurks the mischief in that eye
 Calm and clear,
 As the tear
On the dewy blade of grass,
Where the sunbeams peep and pass
As within a magic glass;
 Tall and fair,
 With the hair
In a cloud of glory spread
Loose about the haughty head,
 Proud and shy
 Cicely.

Pure and proper Cicely,
Winter snow and summer try
With the hues of earth and sky,
 All their arts,
 All their parts,
On the fashion of thy frame
Without fetter, without name,
Fiery frost and frozen flame,

How to form
 Sleep and storm
 Both within one maiden dress,
 Pink and golden prettiness,
 Proud and shy
 Cicely.

Pure and wayward Cicely,
 Tell me, darling, tell me why
 Fast the happy seasons fly,
 And a wee
 Thing like thee,
 As thou wast not long ago,
 Dares so naughtily to grow
 Far above the flowers that blow,
 Made more sweet
 By thy feet?
 If I only had my will,
 Thou wouldst be a baby still,
 Proud and shy
 Cicely.

Pure and untamed Cicely,
 Maidens we can cheaply buy
 When we bid enough and cry;
 But the price
 For a nice
 Daughterkin like thee, were more
 Than the diamonds and the ore
 In the fairies' hidden store.
 Ah, if face
 Were all grace,
 Thou would'st have but little need;
 But the beauty is the deed,
 Proud and shy
 Cicely.

MY WINIFRED.

Have you not seen Winifred,
Winifred,

Never silent, never still,
By her will?

Then you surely have to see
What a maiden child can be,
Who is quite
Now a mite,

Like a bud on a rose-tree,
Soft and white.

O she is the sweetest pet,
Ever framed or dreamed of yet.

You must see my Winifred,
Winifred,

In her glancing girlie state
Delicate.

Like a butterfly she goes,
Scarcely touching with her toes
Stone or stair,
As on air,

In a little breeze that blows
Back her hair.

Catch the sunbeam, bind it fast—
There's the living child at last.

Would you hear my Winifred,
Winifred,

Queen-like moving up and down
With her crown?

With the halo on her face
Of the ardent eager grace
Shining out,
Chasing doubt

From the dimple's scarlet trace,
With a pout?

When she prattles, in the chime
Rings the music of all time.

Oh, I love my Winifred,
 Winifred,
 Rustling, bustling in a glow
 To and fro.
 With her tiny hands at toil,
 Heedless if they speed or spoil
 What they take,
 What they break,
 Or bequeath a hopeless coil
 For my sake ;
 Like a roseleaf on the wind,
 Leaving sweeter worlds behind.

THE WHITE MAIDEN.

Oh ! is she gone, Queen Beauty with her blessing,
 Who shed a sunshine on the lowliest flower,
 And moved in music like God's own caressing
 Alike on breaking heart and broken tower ;
 Who filled the awful blank of empty spaces,
 In the lone labour struggling dimly up,
 With the sweet glory of bright angel faces
 And hands that held the sacramental cup ;
 Who bade the downcast look and hope for ever,
 And on the darkest midnight shadow shone,
 With some great thought that fired a great endeavour ;
 Oh, is she gone ?

She walked beside the nomad in his ranging,
 As over rolling pasture waves he went,
 The one true presence amid death unchanging,
 That led his wanderings and illumed his tent ;
 She showed the blade of grass ran out in wonder
 At length, and blots had a celestial pose,
 Heaven in a herb, the dust with jewels under,
 And made the desert blossom as the rose ;
 She lent the grandeur of her consecration
 To common clay, and upward framed each fall,
 Unfolding to pure eyes the revelation
 Aflame in all.

Oh, is she gone, and blessing with Queen Beauty,
 Who did transfigure the most ugly lot,
 And made Divine the meanest drudging duty,
 And poured all Heaven on earth's least lovely spot?
 She was behind the hero in his cottage,
 And wafted him to power on eagle wings,
 Turning to nectar his poor mess of pottage,
 And strengthened him to do heroic things;
 Aye, then she gave the rapt and rugged toiler
 Nobility, that kings may never don,
 And raised him to a rank above his spoiler;
 Oh, is she gone?

The shepherd boy, who trod the misty mountain,
 Found there the footprints of her chosen place,
 And the fair maiden mirrored in the fountain
 Caught a new splendour from her blushing face;
 Veiled as a virgin, to the prophet's guesses
 She did unbare the secret of her charms,
 In solitudes of solemn wildernesses,
 And wrapt the reverent saint within her arms;
 She turned to pearls the dew-drops on the blossom,
 And wrought to marble halls the huts of mire,
 And burned in each unconquerable bosom
 A sacred fire.

Nay, yet in quiet nooks with some she lingers,
 The Beauty Queen whom Science doth not give,
 While here and there her glorifying fingers
 Are laid on us, till we arise and live;
 If faith is feeble, and the stars we cherish
 Are fading as in blind despair we grope,
 When solid landmarks melt as mist and perish,
 She whispers to the heart undying hope;
 Though pedants seek the grace which in dissection
 Escapes, as they their crimson pages con,
 She sends through loving souls her resurrection;
 She is not gone.

Even in the grimy town by God forsaken,
Deep in the muddy maze of sin and soot,
She can strange thrills of wonderment awaken,
And on the prostrate vice hath set her foot ;
The pining seamstress swept in lordly vision,
Who puts her life into each starving stitch,
Forgets awhile the grudging world's derision,
And dreams possest by her that she is rich ;
The hardened wretch, an outcast, dogged by danger,
Where'er he sinks in subterfuges wild,
Once more with her who is not all a stranger
Becomes a child.

The Crownèd Skeleton, that men call Science
And love to honour, now is in her place,
With scales, and scoops, and probes, it scowls defiance
At the White Maiden with the modest grace ;
Propt on a ghastly throne, with blood cemented
By gags and straps and saws and murderous knives,
It revels in new crimes by it invented,
And hecatombs of wasted tortured lives ;
And shall we pay it tax of tears and crying,
Though sceptred by the earth and fawned upon,
Or bend the knee to one that feeds on dying,
A Skeleton ?

Still doth Queen Beauty breathe her benediction
On loyal breasts that seek her in their toil,
And in the hovel breaks the black affliction
That hugs the cradle with its serpent coil ;
And still in dirty court and devious alley
She drops her diamonds and repairs the wrong,
And casts on snowy peak and snooded valley
The mantle of her many-coloured song ;
And still she stands, though veiled, and flings her fancies
Like flowers of flame on wayside and on shore,
And those who mock her radiant young romances
Steal from her store.

A STELLAR EXCURSION.

I am alone, save for the moon so white,
 Alone with God as any anchorite ;
 And yet a waft of airy presences
 From cowslip bells and coy anemones,
 Falls on me as a fragrance of the night
 Divine as death and sweeter far than sight,
 And fills me with its rapture till I float
 (Or seem to) in a silver-wingèd boat
 With stars and planets through the purple air
 Like fireflies tangled in the dusky hair
 Of beautiful dear night. And unseen hands
 Bind me with grateful gossamers and bands
 Of kind delicious dew, and pelt my face
 With roses torn from some enchanted place.
 But still I am alone with God, and fly
 Swift as a thought through the dim dreamy sky,
 Which opens to receive me and my bliss
 And closes on me softly like a kiss.
 Borne by a cloud yoked to a balmy wind,
 That laughs for utter joy and leaves behind
 A trail of star-dust, I go gently on
 By trackless paths no man before has gone,
 And on the drowsy air unfolding sweet
 I mark the rosy print of baby feet.

A GLIMPSE.

Lo! in the middle watches of the night
 That brooded o'er me like a raven's wing,
 I was aware of something more than sight,
 An awful instant overshadowing.
 I heard no solemn sound of wind or wave,
 No voice of One that ruled the cosmic strife,
 I seemed beyond the borders of the grave
 And at the dreadful bases of all Life.

Far, far away the pallid stars had fled
 I knew not whither, like a flock of sheep,
 And a great Rose that crimson lustre shed
 Crept over the broad bosom of the deep.
 It grew a churning sea of fire and blood
 Tost upward like the petals of a flower,
 And moved in silence on that flaming flood
 The breath of unimaginable Power.
 No fear was mine, and deeper even than joy
 The passion that possessed me, as I lay
 One with Omnipotence, and not a toy
 Clogged with the fleshly garments of decay.
 As some dissolving mist before me Space
 Rolled backward, and the earth itself took flight,
 I felt a Presence, but I saw no Face,
 And all around me and within was Light.

THOUGHTS.

The thoughts that thrill throughout all space
 To break like waves on distant shores,
 Reflect the glory of God's Face
 And shine from His exceeding stores;
 To throb for ever in the breast
 Of other souls in larger lands,
 And breathe the rapture of unrest
 With moulding as of giant hands;
 Till their strange pulses stir the life
 And shape the work of angel powers,
 And burst at length through blessed strife
 In marvels of immortal flowers.
 They rise from this poor mortal dearth
 In sudden moods, I know not why,
 And lift me beyond time and earth
 To range through all eternity.
 My inmost being seems to rend
 And yield its final secret up,

With every bliss its own to blend
 In one intoxicating cup.
 Vast heights and depths before me lie
 And something of each treasure give,
 Till all my life begins to die
 And as it dies begins to live.

THE EVERLASTING CHILD.

Though in the purple born to wealth and pleasure
 And glorious art,
 I made for my own breast as its one measure
 The human heart;
 And long I wandered lonely among plains
 And bitter pains
 That were not mine, yet were my very own,
 The sadder that they seemed unheard, unknown,
 Upon me thrown
 By brothers who would sin and mourn and slave
 Unto the grave.
 Why did the world go round to wails of sorrow,
 And dimmer loom
 Through lurid rays of each more ghastly morrow,
 Its daily doom?
 I sought to probe the mystery, that still
 A crownèd Ill
 Sat as a nightmare on the suffering lands
 With giant hands,
 And wove of wedding robe for rapture sweet
 A winding sheet—
 That crushed into the dust the bloom of beauty
 And all the strife and stern delight of duty,
 With iron feet.

But, ah, I could not find the fount of error
 Where'er it rose,
 Nor would the white lips of despair and terror
 The truth disclose.

And then I climbed till darkness bade me stop
 A mountain top,
And wearily I laid me down and wept,
I wished to die and in my sadness slept,
 While angels kept
Around me faithful watch, till silence spoke
 And I awoke.
The earth and heaven seemed by some magic tether,
 With mingled sound
And sight that yet were one, together
 In music bound.
A storm was gathering, and the vapours rolled
 And voices tolled,
While all about me was the summer's hue
 And blessed blue,
As though the skies had fallen upon the wild,
 And daylight smil'd
On midnight's breast, and, lo, amid the thunder
And stars and flowers and clouds that burst asunder,
 A little Child.

The lightning came and crept with slavish fawning
 Unto his feet,
And wrapt about him in the dreadful dawning
 Its shining sheet,
And with its red tongue licked his baby hands
 That gave commands,
And bathed his brow in its consuming sight,
His brow that was with solemn beauty bright
 And sacred might ;
Till he stood out, in that tremendous frame
 Incarnate flame.
And yet those eyes in all that blaze of glory
 That blasting fell,
Beamed with the joy of Love's own ancient story
 Ineffable.
And I was strangely drawn in spite of fear
 Divinely near,

To that young Form which had an infant face
And yet with Space
Seemed clothed as with Eternity's attire
And old desire ;
And, yielding to the rapture strong and tender,
I knelt at last by him in that great splendour
Within the fire.

And then, without a single thought of turning,
I lowly laid
Myself on the white bosom of that burning,
If half afraid,
Yet stirred by holy passion to espy
The majesty
Of that most gentle Child, who made his throne
Of thunder with the lightning for his zone,
In peace alone.
I poured my heart of universal care
In one wild prayer
Before him, as he played in calm reliance
Of grandeur mild,
With deadly forces in their vain defiance,
That little Child.
And as I prayed unutterable Life,
Begot by strife,
Rushed through my veins in re-creating love ;
And all above,
And all around, as if I were a toy
They would destroy,
Those waves of Life rolled as the clouds they rifted
And my sad soul to their own height uplifted,
In fearful joy.

It was not sight and it was more than seeing,
While tempests blew,
When passed into the texture of my being
A knowledge new.
Celestial kindness in its perfect rose,

And pure repose
 Almighty, and through everlasting time
 Voice of the planets chanting their old chime,
 Robed him sublime.
 I saw, I heard, I felt the kingly Truth
 Divine as Youth,
 That God arrayed in His serene infinity
 At awful rest,
 Is with the glory of a glad virginity
 Secure and blest.
 And a new nature told me all through Space
 That child-like Face
 For ever laughed, and in the shine and shade
 Made and unmade
 The many worlds, and scattered pain and bliss
 That none may miss,
 And is the God whom we in life keep trying
 To find and follow, who to us in dying
 Reveals His kiss.

WHITE FEET.

A little child with golden hair,
 A little child was she,
 But the moon went up its starry stair
 And the night-wind chanted free;
 On either cheek a red rose burned
 And her eyes with fever shone,
 And never to right or left she turned
 But stept serenely on;
 The vampire swooped and fluttered round
 And flapt its fatal wing,
 But she was bound for a better ground
 In the Presence of the King.

 Strange faces peeped and peered at *her*,
 Dim cries made mocking plea,
 And she heard from far the wild water
 That tumbled to the sea;

The leopard from its bloody lair
Arose a feast to find,
But when he saw that marvel fair
He followed meek behind ;
For she was led by an inward light
That bade her bosom sing,
On her pathway bright with more than sight
To the Presence of the King.

The bushes drew in threat'ning hands
And the briars left no trace,
As she passed through danger's haunted lands
To her own appointed place ;
The robber with his weapon bared
To deal the deadly thrust,
Slunk from her pure proud beauty scared
By the more than human trust ;
And a sweeter way and a softer will
Came to each savage thing,
As she journeyed still through every ill
To the Presence of the King.

A little child in Nature's dress
A little child was she,
Clothed in her own dread loveliness
And wonderful to see ;
The tiger with its form of flame
Sprang splendid in his pride,
But beneath her glance grew fond and tame
And purring kept her side ;
The serpent with its evil eye
And frightful folds to cling,
Could only fly as she floated by
To the Presence of the King.

The shadows wrapt her in their robes,
And a blessing breathed the skies,
And the stars lit up the unearthly globes
Of her great steadfast eyes ;

But the darkness opened wide its door
And the poison damps turned sweet,
And the grimmest reptiles were a floor
Under those dear white feet ;
She had heard of palms and raiment blest
That the pretty angels bring,
And she wanted rest on some pink cloud's breast
In the Presence of the King.

She had risen from her burning bed
And the stifling bounds and pain,
And to midnight as her mother fled
With that vision on her brain ;
The pictures danced and music made
Before her, as she trod
On air and through the awful shade
That seemed the skirts of God ;
She only felt she must be free
From the fever's fiery sting,
And would bend her knee in the fair countree
In the Presence of the King.

Then a leaf fell that could hardly fly
On her dim and lonely dearth,
And while it unlocked all the sky
It darkened the whole earth ;
And the woods and waters seemed so far
That she scarcely saw them now,
And the heaven shrunk to one happy star
That kissed her upturned brow ;
The leopard trembled at her grace
That shed a radiant ring ;
For it filled her face like some holy place
With the Presence of the King.

A little child too frail to roam,
A little child was she,
Who simply sought her native home
In the larger life to be ;

And the leaf that lighted on her eye
 Brought her a better hap,
 And the wind it moaned her lullaby
 On a scarlet blossom's lap ;
 And the tiger, lured no farther on,
 Stood frozen in mid spring,
 And when morning shone her soul had gone
 To the Presence of the King.

COGITO, ERGO SUM.

I.

In the hurry of the Age,
 Blurred and blotted as a page
 Torn to open a new stage,
 We forget the way to live ;
 While we hasten, hasten on,
 And the lesson hardly con,
 Till the schooling time is gone,
 As we take and never give ;
 Ah ! we blindly forward rush,
 Maiden cheeks have lost the blush,
 When our hearts forsake their hush
 And forget the way to live.

2.

Now no duty calls to stay,
 None to ponder and to pray,
 We forget till end of day,
 Thinking is the way to live ;
 On we stumble, man and child,
 In the race for riches wild,
 All defiling and defil'd,
 For a bubble fugitive ;
 Madly, sadly, do we fret
 Fiery hands and feet, and yet
 In the weary work forget
 Thinking is the way to live.

3.

To and fro, by every wind
 Tost, we little comfort find,
 Fearful to be left behind,
 And forget to think and live ;
 We no leisure have for rest,
 Or to watch through windows blest
 Visions widening down the West,
 In the strife acquisitive ;
 Still, while pausing not to scan
 In the centuries the plan
 Shaping forth a fairer man,
 We forget to think and live.

4.

At religion's bidding now
 Worshippers no longer bow, *
 And forget with broken vow,
 They who think not cannot live ;
 Love hath vanished, though it trod
 Once in triumph sun and sod,
 To the Silence that is God,
 Which no vulgar gain may give ;
 None consider life is wrought
 Beautiful as death by thought,
 Fools forget (though fame be bought)
 They who think not cannot live.

KNOW THYSELF. BE THYSELF.

I.

Said the ancient Gospel, sent
 Down from Heaven to mortals pent
 In their ignorance content,
 "*Know thyself*" and be ;
 News it told to every nation
 Tuned by martial meditation

To receive its revelation,
 Purchased not with fee ;
 Sweet it fell on breaking hearts,
 Groping in the glorious arts
 For their proper human parts—
“ Know thyself ” and be.

2.

Says the modern Gospel, taught
 By the earth in living wrought
 With unselfish act and thought,
“ Be thyself ” and know ;
 Joy it carries to the labour
 Done with kingly song or sabre,
 Flashed to help a wounded neighbour
 With a righteous blow ;
 Beautiful it calls to men,
 Armed with rifle or the pen,
 On the throne, in fever's den—
“ Be thyself ” and know.

3.

Said the ancient Gospel writ
 In the flames by passion lit,
 All of tears and travail knit,
“ Know thyself ” and be ;
 Teach the mind, that is the measure
 Of thy toiling and thy pleasure
 And the truth, that is a treasure
 Which alone sets free ;
 From these cramping prison bars
 Raise it to its native stars,
 Lamp of Venus, torch of Mars—
“ Know thyself ” and be.

4.

Says the modern Gospel, new
 To the Gentile and the Jew,

Bathing all the world like dew,
"Be thyself" and know;
 Wisdom oft the feeling smothers,
 Keeps the kindest men from others
 Made and meant to be their brothers,
 As does Arctic snow;
 Charity comes now and yet
 Preaches love, till we forget
 Use of bloody bayonet—
"Be thyself" and know.

5.

Said the ancient Gospel, read
 In the track of battle's tread,
 By the dying and the dead,
"Know thyself" and be;
 In the compass of the learning
 Pushed to the most hidden turning,
 Hard it strove with idle yearning
 Heaven itself to see;
 It could not the secret find
 Dear to every wave and wind,
 While it sang in error blind,
"Know thyself" and be.

6.

Says the modern Gospel, clear
 To the bosom wrung with fear,
 In the shadow of the tear,
"Be thyself" and know;
 Look within and mark the glory
 Of the love surpassing story,
 Better than the laurels gory,
 To its greatness grow;
 Rise upon the barren clod
 Of the earth where earthlings plod
 To thy summit—thou art God;
"Be thyself" and know.

THE UNKNOWN GOD.

I.

Thou Unknown God, whom yet I serve
In dim and doubtful ways,
Though oft the unequal soul may swerve
From sudden light that slays ;
To Thee I lift my lowly sight
And at Thy glory guess,
Who seek a Presence in the night
Of Thy great loveliness.

2.

Thou art above me in a thought
Of overwhelming grace,
Whereby this little life is caught
Beyond all starry space ;
And yet I cannot touch Thy hands
Which from my worship fly
And move in music through the lands,
O crownèd Mystery.

3.

Thou art beneath me as I tread
The rugged upward slope,
That through the dying and the dead
Climbs to the heaven of Hope ;
And if I tremble at the truth
Or faint in weathers wild,
From Thee I yet rekindle youth,
Thou dread Eternal Child.

4.

Thou art around me in the hush
Before the thunder shower,
When all my better passions rush
Into their perfect flower ;

And yet it seems a mocking act
Sung when the players cease,
A vision more than living fact
Of awful armèd Peace.

5.

Thou stealest on me like a thief,
When shadows weave a chain
Within me, in the splendour brief
Of some delicious pain ;
And though I trust Thy grandeurs clasp
The heart that sees not *them*
And hungers on, I may not grasp
Thy garment's fleeting hem.

6.

I place the Picture on the shelf
Of that which cannot be,
O Thou that hidest so Thyself
From one that needeth Thee ;
But though Thy darkness deepen still,
I only follow more
The stars that work Thine unknown Will,
And Thee in night adore.

THE MASTER OF THE SPELL.

In Honorem.

O lay the warrior in the grave,
Whose only sword was song,
Who drew it for the suffering slave
And battled against wrong.
The fight is fought,
The victory wrought ;
Lo, hushed and weeping kings and kingdoms round him
throng,

He found his country strong and fair
 And raised it up the starry stair,
 And left it and all countries yet more fair and strong ;
 He came, and with no faltering foot or breath
 To his last field and his last conquest—Death.
 And none is greater
 Than this creator,
 Who, with his wondrous will and solemn seeing,
 New globes in slumber still called into being ;
 Bury him with the dear and mighty dead
 And to a mourning empire's muffled tread,
 That all who honoured him may know
 We prized his glorious art,
 And *we* are stricken with the blow
 That pierced his human heart.
 No sackcloth sere,
 No cypress here
 For him whose fame is as the awful mountains,
 Who slaked our eager thirst
 With draughts divine from those eternal fountains
 Whence drew our Shakespeare first.
 He is not dead and he shall live for ever,
 Who with his pure and passionate endeavour
 Fought those dark pains and tangled problems out
 Which many fight that fail,
 And sent down Time the echoing victor's shout
 Which bids us too prevail.
 He bears the bays, and splendid laurels
 Wrung from the night in bloodless quarrels
 So wisely and so well,
 In all things high and richly human
 The Master of the Spell,
 With strength of man and warmth of woman.
 A universal man,
 He held no sordid plan,
 But took the least and greatest in his arms
 And found a message in the meanest bud,
 And saw and gathered unsuspected charms

In humble trifles under moss or mud.
 Ah, he had gazed on God's sweet dreadful Face
 And caught some reflex of the unearthly grace
 And terrible pure fire with infinite desire—
 Who was so broad and earthly yet,
 And in his vision solemn of heavenly court and column
 The kindly soil could not forget,
 And our great common Mother whence he drew
 His power and all the rapture and the dew ;
 For, though he was a very king,
 And with the holy flame of Heaven anointed,
 And loved upon his throne to sing
 Of those high themes to which he was appointed,
 Yet would he stoop to waving woods and streams,
 And mix their music with his wildest dreams.
 But, in his stepping down,
 While he would press the baby to his bosom,
 He (as he picked with us the wayside blossom)
 Remembered still his crown.
 And now, as then,
 A king of men.
 In nothing common, though he sang of common things,
 Who rather bare the low above on angel wings,
 And let them in his sunshine flutter,
 And his great language utter.
 He never wrote a line to raise a blush
 Upon one maiden's cheek,
 Nor broke with careless gibe the holy hush
 Of prayer that children seek ;
 But with a knightly heart he dared and did
 Meet services for men,
 Nor prying looked beneath the coffin lid
 Of things past wholesome ken.
 Those ministries of general use
 And pleasant rites profuse,
 That are the flower
 And happy power
 Of every day and every year,

He sang and made them doubly dear ;
And those sweet human franchises of love,
Which levels all vain strife,
And lifts the beggar to the stars above
Beside the God of Life ;
Fair freedoms and equalities of heart,
With consecrating art
He sang and old observances made young
With dews divine that on them glistened,
And rainbow hopes on black abysses hung
He sang and all men listened.
The pilgrimage of souls in pain
Bound with their sins' sore burning chain,
In battle tost and tumbled
As to the Light they stumbled,
By strange stern ways and loss and cross and woe and shame,
Through night and blight, with rod and flood and each false
name,
Lured not by Siren's glamour,
Proof against armies' clamour,
With faint pursuing feet and faces sad and seamed,
And hardly then through blood and tears and fire redeemed,
At death's last grim pale portal,
He sang and made immortal.
And, with his wondrous word,
He had for those that heard
The prophet's burden, and in trumpet tones
Which leapt from heart to heart like stepping stones,
With its true presage
He told us of the better times to be,
And his clear message
Made slaves and cowards men and rise up free ;
He taught contempt of self
And place and power when only gilded,
And one great purpose through his preaching ran—
That he who ruled himself
Upon the rock of duty builded,
Was more than king and God's first gentleman.

And, if horizons darkened,
He sang till peoples hearkened
That sure and simple duty,
Done in no poor and private strength,
But somehow sometime carried out at length,
Would roll the world rejoicing up the path of duty.
Alas, that he is gone! Alas, for us!
Not for that royal head;
We would not have it otherwise than thus,
For him who is not dead;
Though now all climes and nations,
All true and tender breasts
With ours mix lamentations,
He only rests.
Ah, now the sword is sheathed,
Those tender words he breathed,
That thrilled above our petty fears and fasting
And dreadful ambient deeps,
And echo on in music everlasting—
For now the warrior sleeps.
Lo, the supreme and awful seer of Avon,
Who held God's hand and wrote
Touching each human note,
Came down and welcomed him to the blest haven,
Where in pure light
And perfect sight
All seers and sages of all times and creeds
In their white glory dwell,
The Brothers of the Spell;
And there, beyond the shadow of our needs,
He sleeps, and all is well;
And there he dreams, on his high throne of thunder,
Great thoughts of conquering love and worlds of wonder,
In peace ineffable.

A DREAM.

It was a little girl of seven,
Her childish looks were free,

The star the brightest in the heaven
Was not more bright than she,
The great church clock had struck eleven
And clouds were none to see.

I trow she had a winsome air,
Her wondrous eyes were sweet,
She made the very earth more fair,
Whatever she did meet—
The sun (I envied) on her hair,
The flowers beneath her feet.

She held a lily in her hand,
She looked a sceptred queen
Who walked in love about her land,
And left her footsteps green,
She had the habit of command
And honour that was seen.

Behind her followed a great hound
Most fearsome to the sight,
By a thin thread of scarlet bound
Which curbed his monstrous might,
The birds in beauty sung around,
And all the land was light.

She said, "O stranger, come with me
And duteous presents bring,
I seek the better days to be,
Where shadows do not cling
And care and sin and sorrow flee—
I journey to the King.

"They tell me, He is very good
To children and to all,
He made the water and the wood
Which to each other call,
And mountains that have ever stood
Like pillars in His hall."

I went with her a flowery way,
Where winds rejoicing run—
Where pretty brooks delight to stray,
That babble in the sun,
As if they thankfully would pray
And Heaven had quite begun.

But then, I cannot tell you why,
Before I even could mark
The angel wings that fain would fly,
Soft singing like a lark
She melted in the morning sky,
And all the land was dark.

Yet, though I cannot see her still
That voice may never rest,
And when with bitter ache or ill
The weary heart is prest,
Like music of a secret rill
It murmurs in my breast.

THE HOLY QUEST.

For fifty years this heart had waited
Some glorious deed to work for men,
But yet it hungered still unmated
And swept through space with fruitless ken ;
It told its passion to the pen,
And only woke in night belated ;
Unhelped it never had a doubt,
That past the vulgar sham and shout
And all the pride of petty scorning,
At last must rise the radiant morning,
And the one angel would step out
Robed in the love her sole adorning.

From day to day I sought the fuel
Which burning keeps the Vestal fire,
And in the teeth of tempest cruel
I found great thoughts and sweet desire
And maiden hope in white attire
With purity that is God's jewel ;
My body drooped, and darkness came
With poverty that fools deem shame,
And wrapt me in its wings of wonder,
Where dwell the secrets of the thunder,
While brighter glowed the sacred flame
And solemn portals burst asunder.

And still I knew the rapturous vision
Of queenly grace, or kingly toil
Done in the light of that decision
Which draws from Heaven its holy oil,
Would bring some day a splendid spoil
To crown me 'mid the world's derision ;
I heard afar on misty mount,
Beyond all human quest and count
And threatening shadows growing grimmer
That made the angel faces dimmer,
The murmur of the mystic fount
And caught at times its golden glimmer.

It might be death, it might be glory,
In which this mateless heart should meet
At length the hour to live its story,
And rushing into blossom sweet
Break as a billow at the feet
Of some great guardian promontory ;
It might be sacrifice or gain
That shed no black accusing stain,
But come it would when I was fitted,
If other fading joys had flitted,
And leave me with its blessed pain
Into the inner shrine admitted.

And yet the years rolled on, and nothing
 Brought to my seamed and slaving hands
But daily bread and common clothing,
 And not the rule of richer lands
 To slake ambition's large demands
With royalty of high betrothing ;
 No bosom opened to me rest,
 No swimming eyes the love confest
That would have been my soul's salvation ;
No mighty task of tribulation.
 On me the awful brand imprest,
Which is the sinner's consecration.

I lower stooped, my head grew hoary
 In fretting over problems deep
And gazing at the harvests gory
 Where graves their grisly triumphs keep
 And sigh from their gray centuried sleep,
Vita est nil, memento mori ;
 But still, though others won their meed
 In fiery font, or godlike deed
The chains of captive arms to sever
And shine for ever and for ever,
 I only felt my footsteps bleed
On stones that mocked my stern endeavour.

The love or laurels to my neighbour
 Though undeserving alway fell,
With joy of festive dance or tabor
 And music of the marriage bell,
 But left me yet alone to dwell
With honest want and grinding labour ;
 But firm I held my conquering hope,
 And inch by inch up the steep slope
Pushed on from cross to cross my station,
Drawn by a secret gravitation,
 Assured the gate some day would ope
And bathe me in its revelation.

At last I found, when pomp and pleasure
 And legalized and lordly pelf
 Had lost for me their might and measure
 And lay like rubbish on the shelf,
 The unknown God was but Myself—
 The sweetest Truth and dearest treasure ;
 I did not find Myself in art,
 Nor in some loud heroic part
 Which yet a pinch of dust would smother,
 But in the poor and helpless brother
 Laid at the threshold of my heart ;
 And now I rest, and seek no other.

THE BLIND GOD.

Once forth on the great homeless earth
 I wandered night and day,
 While round me deepened a grim dearth
 As I went more astray ;
 The shadows put forth threatening hands,
 The briars were my bed,
 And in the silence of the lands
 Fear raised its snaky head ;
 I knew not whither now to fly
 Nor had a settled goal,
 The earth disowned me, and the sky
 Scowled on my hunted soul.
 Then from the darkness long and low,
 Out of the frozen wild
 Stept forth, as statue from a stone,
 A blind and blessèd Child ;
 A shaft of moonlight smote his brows
 And showed the lurid loss,
 The pale lips wreathed with holy vows,
 One hand upon a cross ;
 And still he journeyed steadfast on,
 Though fiends would backward pull,
 An awful light about him shone,
 And he was beautiful.

He turned his sightless orbs on me,
The face of conquering love,
And when I would but peril see
He pointed me above ;
And, as I lifted up my gaze,
He caught my trembling hands,
And led me through the thorny maze
With looks that were commands ;
But then the danger seemed to melt
As mists in morning air,
And from the haunts where horror dwelt
Burst revelations fair.

And when the fears had taken flight,
He smiled into my own
With heavenly eyes that made earth bright
And had all sorrow known ;
And now when doubts and shadows fall
Or evil would press nigh,
I seek to Him who serveth all
And send my vision high ;
And then the dreadful darkness opes,
I see the presence mild
Of him who comes with angel hopes,
That blind and beauteous Child.

IN MEMORIAM H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CLARENCE
AND AVONDALE.

It was not in the bloody strife,
He held no knightly sword,
When Albert Victor gave his life
An offering to the Lord ;
It was not in the iron chains
Of business that he fell,
All jewelled with the splendid stains
Of those that labour well ;

It was not after glorious years
 That served his country best,
 He entered with the country's tears
 Into more glorious rest.

But, to the sound of pleasure's call
 And music of the feast,
 The message came that comes to all,
 By him expected least ;
 Ah ! when the toilers for him wrought
 And glittered gold and gem,
 The shout of joy which blessings brought
 Sank to a *requiem* ;
 All happiness was at his side,
 He felt his darling's breath,
 But when he would embrace a bride,
 Behold the kiss was death.

Untried in that imperial part
 He destined was to play,
 He yet had the great kingly heart
 Which rules with broader sway ;
 And if not his the dazzling throne
 He worthy was to fill,
 The royal nature was his own—
 To do the people's will ;
 And his, where'er the Master led,
 The consecrated choice,
 When heaven its honours on him shed,
 To follow Duty's voice.

And, lo ! it was the Father's kiss
 Which drew his soul away
 Unto the wedding-feast of Bliss,
 Which nothing might delay ;
 His blameless life, which fain would ope
 Beneath blue skies of love,
 Bright with the beauty of all hope,
 Has blossomed now above ;

At noontide if his sun went down,
He conquered earthly ill,
And he will wear a heavenly crown
And be a Victor still.

THE LIFE BEAUTIFUL.

What is the sweet life beautiful,
Brother, what may it be
That makes the dear heart dutiful,
And like the ocean free?
It murmurs in the bosom
Of children at their play,
And bursts in snow-white blossom
For maidens when they pray;
And on the mother pressing
The baby to her heart,
It breathes a solemn blessing
That never may depart.

What is the sweet life beautiful,
Sister, what is the life
That makes the brave hand dutiful,
And steadfast in the strife?
It echoes in the kindness
Of comrades as they toil,
And brings to souls in blindness
The lamp of holy oil;
It is the blue sky rifting
The clouds that compass trust,
For gentle saints uplifting
The sinner from the dust.

What is the sweet life beautiful,
Brother, what is the spell
That makes the service dutiful,
For angels who once fell?
It ripples round the edges
Of awful acts, where stand

Pale Vestals on lone ledges,
 To save a sinking land ;
 And when the child scarce woman
 Steps through the starless night,
 To carry comfort human,
 It breaks in heavenly light.

What is the sweet life beautiful,
 Sister, what is the bliss
 That makes the spirit dutiful,
 As sealèd with God's kiss ?
 It is the angel fashion
 Moulded by fire and storm,
 That wraps its robe compassion
 Around the fainting form ;
 And when the feet go dutiful
 To love's low secret song,
 This is the sweet life beautiful
 That makes the feeble strong.

THE LIFE WONDERFUL.

What is the life of sweetness,
 My darling, above strife,
 In glory of completeness,
 The wonderful white life ?
 Go, ask it of sick pillows
 That fondled are to rest,
 And seek it from the billows
 That break on woman's breast ;
 In quiet deeds for others
 To loose their iron chains,
 And the great heart that smothers
 Its own exceeding pains.

What is the life of beauty
 With heavenly music rife,

That toils for simple duty,
The wonderful white life?
It dwells in dusky corners
Amid the burnt-out fires,
Where lost and lonely mourners
Weep over dead desires;
And when no stream is flowing
Through wrinkled desert sand,
It falls like summer snowing
Upon a thirsty land.

What is the life of victors,
That triumphs o'er the knife
And *fascēs* of the lictors,
The wonderful white life?
It hungers, as it wrestles
For sisters sad and wan,
And like the storm-tost vessels
Goes struggling, struggling on;
And when on the dark door-sill
The baby fingers plead
For pity or a morsel,
It stoops to baby need.

What is the life that closes
Not here, my girlie wife,
Who camest with the roses,
The wonderful white life?
It is as soft and vernal
As April in the years,
And spirit hath eternal
With vestment of sweet tears;
Beyond all earthly notion,
Above this crumbling clod,
It is the pure devotion
Of woman to her God.

THE BEATIFIC VISION.

Between the dawning and the day it came
Upon me like a spell,
While tolled a distant bell,
A wondrous vision but without a name
In pomp of shining mist and shadowed flame,
Exceeding terrible ;
Before me seemed to open awful Space,
And sheeted tower and spire
With forms of shrouded 'tire
Arose and beckoned with unearthly grace,
I felt a Presence though I saw no face
But the dark rolling fire.

And then a Voice as sweet and soft as tears
But yet of gladness part,
Thrilled through my inmost heart,
Which told the secret of the solemn years
And swept away the clouds of gloomy fears,
The riddles raised by art ;
Till all my soul was bathed with trembling joy
And lost in dreadful bliss,
As at God's very kiss,
While the earth shrivelled up its broken toy,
And like a rose the heavens no longer coy
Laid bare their blue abyss.

The giant wheels and all the hidden springs
Of this most beauteous globe,
Which man may never probe,
Burst on me with a blaze of angel wings
And each bright orb that like a diamond clings
To the veiled Father's robe ;
I saw with vision that was more than sight,
The levers and the laws
That fashion stars as straws
And link with perfect loveliness of right,
In the pure duty that is pure delight
And to one Centre draws.

I knew with sudden insight all was best,
 The passion and the pain,
 The searchings that seem vain
 But lead if by dim blood-stained steps to Rest,
 And only are the beatings of God's Breast
 Beneath the iron chain ;
 I knew each work was blessed in its place,
 The eagle and the dove,
 While Nature was the glove
 Of that dear Hand which everywhere we trace,
 I felt a Presence though I saw no face,
 And it was boundless Love.

MORS JANUA VITÆ.

What is the life the Stoic
 Essayed but never won,
 The simple life heroic
 Of honest duty done ?
 My child, I see its traces
 In soldier saints of yore,
 Who up the stony places
 The cross of suffering bore ;
 And in the lily meadow
 Of glory fair and green,
 Where God has left His shadow
 And virgin steps have been.

What is the life, that rises
 Above all petty things,
 And as it prays surprises
 The waft of angel wings ?
 My child, it is the tender
 Submission to a blow,
 And the calm sweet surrender
 Of what we love below ;
 When, earthly dower despising,
 Before the parting ways,
 We chose the sacrificing
 That in its saving slays.

What is the life, whose fountains
 Flow ever through the years,
 That builds on stormy mountains
 Temples of fire and tears?
 My child, go read the pages
 A maiden hand has turned,
 And ask of better ages
 That with its altar burned;
 It flashes from the trembling
 Prayer at a mother's knee,
 And the dim wild assembling
 Of nations to be free.

What is the life the Master
 Has in its beauty shown,
 Which makes man's worst disaster
 Divine and all His own?
 My child, it seeks the burden
 That other backs should bear
 And gladly finds as guerdon
 A heavier cross of care;
 It treads the path of trial
 By martyrs' crimson graves,
 And loves the last denial
 That in its slaying saves.

THE NEW ROUND TABLE.

Hail to the august and good,
 To the Science Brotherhood,
 Flower of school and college,
 Ever foremost in the fray
 For the Truth's untrodden way,
 Gallant knights of knowledge!
 Hail to the devoted band,
 Pushing on with fearless hand
 Through the fogs of fable,

With the light upon the lance
Thrust at Crownèd Ignorance,
By the New Round Table.

Now we have a higher rank,
Far above the gilded blank
Of a worn out order,
Raised by right of wisdom's power
To a more than kingly dower—
Realms without a border ;
Titles long have lost their hold,
Dead with their abuses old
And the false servility ;
With uncovered head we bow
To the furrows on the brow
Of the New Nobility.

Down before them bloody faiths
Fall, and melt as misty wraiths
Grim and honoured errors ;
Creeds that poison souls of men
In their dark mephitic den,
But with lying terrors ;
Gaunt religions prone to prey
On the beauty they would slay
With a quack perdition,
Topple from their ghastly thrones
On the path of martyrs' bones—
Cursed with superstition.

Forward go the glorious Few,
Still baptized in crimson dew
With their wounds as graces,
And if soldiers fail and drop
From the ranks that never stop,
Others fill their places ;
Forward from eclipse of fears
Through ennobling flame and tears,

Clouds before them flying
To the waters at the Fount
Of the veiled and virgin Mount,
Conquerors though dying.

THE BUTTERCUP TIME.

When the yellow flower comes up
Which we call the Buttercup,
 Buttercup,
 Buttercup—
In that happy blossom time,
When the fancy runs in rhyme
And sweet feelings pair and chime ;
 Then, O then
 Past all ken
Love that is the life of men
From my budding breast comes up,
 With a colour, and a glow,
 And a flashing, and a flow,
Like the yellow Buttercup,
 Buttercup,
 Buttercup.

When the sunbeams fall and sup
On the yellow Buttercup,
 Buttercup,
 Buttercup,
And the gold dust ever bright
Lures the honey bee in flight
To its vegetable light ;
 O my heart
 Feels a smart,
Blissful pain through every part,
And in flower comes flaming up
 With the passion of a boy
 In intoxicated joy,

Like the yellow Buttercup,
Buttercup,
Buttercup.

When the yellow flower comes up
Which we call the Buttercup,
Buttercup,
Buttercup;
Spring puts on its royal crown,
And the sky forgets to frown
Or sends laughing breezes down;
And, from gloom,
Bridal bloom
Of a lover's bridal room,
In a glory all comes up;
While my spirit of it takes,
And is wedded and awakes,
Like the yellow Buttercup,
Buttercup,
Buttercup.

DREAM BABIES.

Sometimes, when I am alone—
Am alone,
Baby footsteps come to me—
Come to me,
Out of Dreamland and the zone
Where good babies love to be;
Baby voices
Wake my breast,
Which rejoices
And takes rest;
Baby shoulders bud with wings,
While they talk of wondrous things;
Patter, patter,
Chatter, chatter
Through the shut and bolted door

Up and down the painted floor,
 In bright frocks
 Fair as stars,
 Through the locks,
 Through the bars,
O they glimmer, float and fly,
 Rise and flutter
 In an utter
Wonderment of ecstasy—
 Ecstasy,
 Ecstasy.

Sometimes, when my heart is sad—
 Heart is sad,
Baby fingers pat my face,
 Pat my face,
Till I feel I never had
Sorrow and can find no trace ;
 Baby fingers
 Give a touch,
 And it lingers
 Loving much.
Ah, the pressure of those hands
Warm and white from better lands,
 Calling, calling,
 Falling, falling,
Just like rose leaves on my brow,
Thrills me ever—thrills me now.
 In the strife
 Their pure breath,
 More than life,
 More than death,
Stays and strangely stirs my powers
 With the story
 Of a glory
From the happy land of flowers—
 Land of flowers,
 Land of flowers.

Sometimes, when my hopes are dim—
 Hopes are dim,
Baby eyes look through the dark—
 Through the dark,
And with light and laughter swim
Like the rainbow on the Ark ;
 Baby glances
 Fire my mind,
 Till it dances
 Free as wind ;
And I see a haven near,
One betwixt the smile and tear,
 Holding, holding,
 Folding, folding,
All my being in its arms
On a bed of baby charms,
 As with sleep
 Lightly prest
 In a deep
 Crimson rest.
Through the curtain of the night,
 With the morning
 Blue adorning,
Steals that vision more than sight—
 More than sight,
 More than sight.

Sometimes when I seem quite lost—
 Seem quite lost,
Baby lips all fresh from Heaven—
 Fresh from Heaven,
Rhyme with mine in fragrance tost
Not from blooms to mortals given ;
 Baby kisses
 Brush my mouth,
 Sweet as blisses
 Of the South.
And their fresh and fragrant dew

Makes my broken world anew,
 Dearer, dearer,
 Clearer, clearer.
O the pretty lips that pout
Bringing my lost language out,
 With a crisp
 Scarlet flow,
 And a lisp
 Soft as snow !
Whispering leaves, and brooks, and birds,
 Meet and mingle
 In a single
Waft of music not in words—
 Not in words,
 Not in words.

SECTION V.

PANSIES AND ROSEMARY.

THE PRETTY PURITAN.

With thy presence falls a hush,
 Pretty Puritan,
Cheeks unknown before to blush
To their red confession rush,
 Fearful of thy ban :
And the hardest bosoms oft
At thy saintly glance grow soft,
 Pretty Puritan.

No one coins a doubtful jest,
 Pretty Puritan,
And our naughty passions rest
When thou speakest what is best,
 As no trifler can ;
And the story that would sting
Flies, as winter from the spring,
 Pretty Puritan.

In thy cool white dove-like dress,
 Pretty Puritan,
We at angel wings may guess,
With that lowly loveliness
 Sweet without a plan ;
Modesty, that in thee lives,
All its heavenly armour gives,
 Pretty Puritan

Thou dost heal the broken troth,
 Pretty Puritan,
And with thee no longer loath
Hate forgets the hideous oath
 Which rude lips began ;
Wounded creatures to thee run,
As dim blossoms seek the sun,
 Pretty Puritan.

Not with mortal sinners sup,
 Pretty Puritan,
When with thee who callest up
Christ and makest holy cup
 Of the cottage pan ;
Then the dinner of the least
Is a sacramental feast,
 Pretty Puritan.

Birds and children know thy face,
 Pretty Puritan,
Find in thee a hiding place
From the flood, in thy embrace
 With its rainbow span ;
Drop the winds and waters' pride,
When these nestle to thy side,
 Pretty Puritan.

Spiteful spinsters grey and old,
 Pretty Puritan,
Cannot in thy hearing scold,
While the miser quits his gold
 And becomes a man ;
Near thee slanderers dare not lie,
And the doomed may hardly die,
 Pretty Puritan.

Soured divines forsake their dust,
 Pretty Puritan,

As the dog its dirty crust,
Learning from thee simple trust
By which heroes ran ;
Glad to leave their fossil form
For anathemas and storm,
Pretty Puritan.

Politicians play no tricks,
Pretty Puritan,
Builders do not use bad bricks,
Leave their care for candlesticks,
Church and charlatan ;
When thy clear and candid gaze
Reads their projects' muddy maze,
Pretty Puritan.

Partisans with paper fleet,
Pretty Puritan,
Will not thy true judgment meet,
And soft vices are not sweet
If thy vision scan ;
Fools with guns they cannot horse
Marked by thee feel some remorse,
Pretty Puritan.

Causes that would vanquished be,
Pretty Puritan,
When like rats reformers flee,
Breathe another life with thee
Virtuous in their van ;
Following thy faultless pace,
Catch from thee victorious grace,
Pretty Puritan.

Earth is richer for thy tread,
Pretty Puritan,
Better tastes the homely bread,
Greener is the greensward spread,
Kinder breezes fan ;

Nay, the earth is heavenly quite,
Where thou walkest calm and white,
Pretty Puritan.

Queen and crowned by every heart,
Pretty Puritan,
Fraud to thee displays no art,
And the beggar his old part
Blushes through his tan ;
At thy soul's divine undress,
And thy lovely lowliness,
Pretty Puritan.

THE PRETTY PARLOUR MAID.

Trim and taking, sweet and shy
Is our modest Kate,
When the mistress passes by,
Or the master's errant eye
Scans a doubtful plate ;
Pretty proper Kate.

If the master's back is turned,
Different is Kate ;
And the steady ways are spurned,
When the kitchen fire has burned
Low within its grate ;
Nice and naughty Kate.

Simply drest in quiet black
Is our sober Kate ;
Dust avoids her searching track,
And her besom is not slack
To decide its fate ;
Pretty proper Kate.

Should the mistress take a trip,
Quite transformed is Kate ;
Jests in mocking laughter slip

From her ripe and rosy lip,
Always up to date;
Nice and naughty Kate.

Crowned with cap of snowy hue,
Glides our busy Kate;
Still to every meal-time true,
With those eyes of serious blue,
In her humble state;
Pretty proper Kate.

Sometimes—this we blush to own—
When unwatched our Kate,
She to loving friends is known
Arms of welcome to have thrown
Round a manly mate;
Nice and naughty Kate.

Sad and silent save when called
Seems our thoughtful Kate;
Primly in her pantry stalled,
With her silver quite enthralled,
Never slow or late;
Pretty proper Kate.

In not inconvenient gloom,
Cleverly will Kate
Disappearing from the room
Wander off, to fetch a broom—
At the garden gate;
Nice and naughty Kate.

Guests remark her pleasant looks,
Praise our little Kate,
Armed with prudent eyes and looks
And the most religious books
That must elevate;
Pretty proper Kate.

When I go my final rounds,
Thinking well of Kate,
I have heard suspicious sounds
As of some one breaking bounds—
Not a falling slate ;
Nice and naughty Kate.

Even the parson good will find
In our gentle Kate ;
Though he draws his window blind
Down on other womankind,
Her he cannot hate ;
Pretty proper Kate.

Right upon the parlour floor,
Casually has Kate
Danced and not with any boor,
And behind the parlour door
Steps at times elate ;
Nice and naughty Kate.

Clean and careful in her toil
Is our natty Kate,
Not to let the linen soil,
Nor the kettle overboil,
Nor the fire abate ;
Pretty proper Kate.

Folks have said who envy bliss,
Not averse is Kate
To a compliment or kiss,
That no gentleman would miss
Calling for the rate ;
Nice and naughty Kate.

None need tell her duty twice,
So discreet is Kate,
While her footsteps move like mice,

Looking always neat and nice,
 And at work sedate ;
 Pretty proper Kate.

Oft has magic moonlight shone
 On excursive Kate,
 With a bosom not of stone,
 Deeming stars (but not alone)
 Mind will educate ;
 Nice and naughty Kate.

Tended by her, I am sure
 No one is like Kate,
 With the forehead pale and pure,
 Downcast eyes and pose demure,
 Lips that never prate ;
 Pretty proper Kate.

When I mark her romps not seen,
 Hear of roving Kate,
 I, beneath that saintly sheen,
 Feel the Devil who has been
 Her must animate ;
 Nice and naughty Kate.

ON A DOOR-STEP.

I.

Gaily in the gilded hall,
No one's Pet,
 Moves the wanton queen of all,
 Ready vassals at her call
 Should she for some trifle fret ;
 Jewelled, painted to her eyes,
 Fawned upon with fulsome lies,
 As if earth and starry skies
 Just for her in beauty met ;

While upon her door-step lone
 Heaven to thee gives but a stone,
No one's Pet.

2.

Rude thy pillow, rough thy fare,
No one's Pet,
 With the brow opprest by care,
 With the feet defil'd and bare
 And those long dark lashes wet ;
 With the lips that sorrows parch
 Tost about from street to arch,
 Ever on the weary march,
 Ever with grim foes beset ;
 While the peeress in her pride
 Heeds not suffering at her side,
No one's Pet.

3.

But for Light thy passion pleads,
No one's Pet,
 As it vainly darkness reads
 Which to greater darkness leads,
 And its wounds cannot forget ;
 Ere the lamps that brightly shone
 Over silken sin are gone,
 And the crownèd crime sleeps on ;
 Though thy want is waking yet,
 Seeking love that others feasts,
 Shelter shared by very beasts,
No one's Pet.

4.

Sick of pleasure, sick of art,
No one's Pet,
 Drop the revellers their part
 Danced upon a broken heart,

Heeding not their holy debt ;
 Each has somewhere some one dear,
 Eyes that hold the happy tear,
 Breast attuned to help and hear,
 Lips of coral, locks of jet ;
 Thou hast nought where myriads roam,
 Till thy God becomes thy home,
 No one's Pet.

MADEMOISELLE.

I.

From her crown of dusky tresses,
 To the feet that like caresses
 Hardly touch the earth they tread,
 In the bright hour and the shady
 As a worker so a lady
 Is she, nobly earning bread ;
 To the tips of her white fingers
 When she moves and when she lingers,
 In her breast's bewitching swell,
 With the graces that are plenty
 Fair and foreign, tall and twenty,
 Mademoiselle.

2.

When were such a supple figure,
 Frock from Paris all *de rigueur*,
 Shoes the triumph of sweet toil,
 Hat the final word of fashion,
 Crimson lips for prayer or passion,
 Grown upon our surly soil ?
 All the winter's charm and summer's
 Graver gifts and mirth of mummies,
 In a wondrous union dwell,
 Like the clouds on clover meadows,
 In thy face with shine and shadows,
 Mademoiselle.

3.

If she gives an early lesson,
 If she puts the evening dress on
 Fitting to her like a glove,
 If she tells a fireside story,
 Life in all its youthful glory
 Overflows from her in love ;
 Yes, my children leave their dances
 For dear science and romances
 Which she coaxes from its well ;
 Up the heights and down the hollows,
 Happily each learner follows
 Mademoiselle.

4.

In the dark, dark hour of sickness,
 Never nurse such helpful quickness
 With the knowledge of all herbs ;
 None so wise on arduous errands,
 Or in conjugating gerunds
 Of the most distracting verbs ;
 None so good to serve at tennis
 Or in making pounds of pennies
 With the true financing spell,
 Or at Sunday School addresses,
 As the queen of governesses,
 Mademoiselle.

THE QUEEN OF EVENING.

What is it makes Ethel fair ?
 Dewy eyes or dusky hair ?—
 What is it, my brother ?
 Is it those enchanting eyes,
 Blue and deep as summer skies,
 When the light upon them lies
 As upon no other ?

Is it eyes that shyly look,
 Like some sweet half-folded book,
 Full of love and blessing,
 Sad, yet laughing as a brook
 With a soft caressing?
 What is it makes Ethel fair?
 Kissing eyes, or crownèd hair
 Which no band can smother?
 Sunrise mixed with sunset fires,
 All delights with all desires?
 What is it, my brother?

What is it makes Ethel fair?
 Crimson lips that pout and pair?—
 What is it, O stranger?
 Lips that like a budding rose
 Blush and tremble and uncloze
 And then seek sedate repose,
 As afraid of danger?
 Lips that redden, if they smile
 Or devise a dainty wile
 To give some one pleasure,
 And a dim lone life beguile
 With a new-found treasure?
 What is it makes Ethel fair?
 Lips that so discreetly pair,
 When the rake and ranger
 Woo her with deceit in hope
 Gates of Paradise will open?
 What is it, O stranger?

What is it makes Ethel fair?
 Heavenly nose, or modest air?—
 What is it, pale lover?
 Nose that from our earthly scars
 And these petty bolts and bars
 Points up to its native stars,
 Which for her uncover?

Modesty that fled from all,
 Yet obedient to her call
 And restraining fingers,
 Came to her like evening's fall
 And with her yet lingers?
 What is it makes Ethel fair?
 Pretty nose, or purest air
 In which angels hover?
 Nose that is God's temple spire?
 Atmosphere of holy fire?
 What is it, pale lover?

What is it makes Ethel fair?
 White-waved hands, the world's despair?—
 What is it, ye sages?
 Hands that conquer, as they show
 Heart of flame and form of snow,
 And in deeds of kindness glow,
 Working not for wages?
 Hands that mould Divine their part,
 In compassion quick to start,
 Glad to raise and cherish
 Breasts in iron mill or mart
 Born to pine and perish?
 What is it makes Ethel fair?
 Hands, that are the arts' despair,
 And adorn the pages
 Of the wondrous Book called Life
 With bright pictures not of strife?
 What is it, ye sages?

What is it makes Ethel fair?
 Form, that fits a royal chair?—
 What is it, O artist?
 Form that from the queenly head
 To the feet with rhythmic tread
 Is with such bewitching spread
 It would melt a Chartist?

Form, that men admire and must,
 Swayed by each emotion's gust
 As a young green willow,
 But when we desire to trust
 A delicious pillow?
 What is it makes Ethel fair?
 Form to fill the Imperial chair
 Of a Buonapartist;
 Form that in celestial gleams,
 Gives the sculptor's wildest dreams?
 What is it, O artist?

I know what makes Ethel fair,
Not her glorious eyes or hair—
 I know, gentle reader;
Not the mouth whose crimson curve
 From its beauty could not swerve,
 And was sweetly meant to serve
 As a perfect pleader;
Not the *petit nez* that turns
 Proudly upward, as it spurns
 Bounds of this poor mortal,
 And with heavenly instinct yearns
 For its native portal;
I know what makes Ethel fair,
Not the hand beyond compare
 Shaped to mark a leader,
Not the form where graces dwell;
 And, if I should never tell,
 I know, gentle reader.

MAUDE.

Are you pretty, or a fraud
 But of one or two sweet tenses
 On the poor bewildered senses,
 Cold and calm and measured Maude?
 Shall we toast in juices Massic

Or from a Falernian butt
That proud face serene and classic,
Like a cameo sharply cut
With the lips of marble shut—
So indisputably classic,
That it must receive some laud ?
Are you pretty, or a fraud ?

Is it sterling gold, or trick
Of a calculating nature,
Mocking the true legislature
Stamped in others to the quick ?
Is it real unquestioned beauty
In your very being born,
Or a mask whose paint does duty
For the blushes of the morn,
And conceals the cruel thorn
With false charms that have no duty,
And disguise the poisoned prick ?
Is it sterling gold, or trick ?

Is it virgin snow or not ;
Like the study of a statue
Which stares still unruffled at you,
With the same impassive lot ?
And those not unlovely graces
For a world of frigid art,
Are they just the pose and paces
Acted well and got by heart,
Bought and sold upon the mart ;
As a steed's, that shows her paces
Learned at first nor yet forgot ?
Is it virgin snow, or not ?

Are you pretty or a fraud,
With your clean and classic features
As of the grand Roman creatures
We can see in busts unflaw'd ?

Was there ever such a maiden
With your profile, or a brow
Sculptured as if it were laden
With some great Augusta's vow,
Under which it does not bow—
As if you with empire laden,
Still by nothing could be aw'd?
Are you pretty, or a fraud?

AT THE LOOKING-GLASS.

Come, pretty face, my own and not my own,
And full of secret blisses
And subtle feeling yet to me unknown,
O teach me tender kisses;
And how to look when wooed and hardly won
Just with the proper sweetness,
And when to grant the gift (confessed to none)
With coy and grudged discreteness;
And where to raise to Heaven my ruffled brow
Top-heavy with its tresses,
And with indignant head that will not bow
To take the scorned caresses.
Do show me shyly how to frame a blush
In the most graceful fashion,
And when at the right moment I should rush
To a becoming passion;
How to adjust my ribands and my love
To every fond invasion,
Or trifle gently with a heart or glove
And suit the last occasion;
And still to carry to the best effect
My virtues and my vesture,
And keep a careful liberty correct
Down to a pin or gesture.
Come, pretty face, with not a straying hair
Or touch to hint the slattern,
Instruct me how to be as Venus fair

And still Diana's pattern ;
When to reserve my warmth, or melt as wax
With soft and easy unction,
And out of sternest dignity relax
Into a brief compunction ;
How to compose my beauty for the hour
And humble seem or haughty,
To be the rose's thorn or opening flower
And ever nice if naughty ;
When to be silent or go babbling on,
As times and persons vary,
The gayest partner for the gallant John,
And prim with prudish Mary ;
How to be ready for each ardent scene
With captain or with curate,
And in the hottest fires remain serene
But never quite obdurate ;
When to be grave with bishops for a while
With conscience sad and smitten,
Or effloresce in tennis and a smile
And play with boys the kitten.
Come, pretty face, with such suggestive eyes
That can be meek or merry,
And infinite sweet possibilities,
Another Ellen Terry ;
Before I leave you, tell me how to make
The best of earth and heaven,
And of the whitest flour my shewbread bake
With unseen spicy leaven ;
How I myself may serve and never fast
While serving God *and* mammon,
And cheat the nameless personage at last,
Nor bate a slice of salmon.
Inform me how to be assured of bliss
In spite of soft transgression,
And not to lose one honest crimson kiss
Atoned for by confession ;
When to be noisy with the brave and blithe

Or cross with crabbed inspectors,
And pay attentions and their lawful tithe
Of platitudes to rectors ;
Where to be wise as serpents and take care
Or harmless as the pigeon,
To mix the pleasures of this world and prayer,
And racquets with religion.
Come, pretty face, with that voluptuous mouth,
Not for one moment quiet,
In solitude a rose that droops of drouth,
Not curved for Lenten diet ;
What shall I do to be beloved by all,
The pet of saints and sinners,
To slide with Demas and yet preach like Paul
And miss no decent dinners ?
How must I look to gratify the prude,
Or blunt at least her strictures,
And yet enjoy frank Nature in the nude
And all the warmest pictures ?
What should I say to always have my will
With Heaven and even Old Harry,
To flirt with Jack and not offend his Jill,
And then a fortune marry ?
How may I to the most advantage turn
The modes of court and cloister,
Freeze with Priscilla, and like Sappho burn,
A butterfly and oyster ?
Ah, yes, I see ! the mystery is out,
The secret is variety,
To be demure and dance, to please and pout,
And wear the paint of piety ;
And to all *men* to be all things, asleep
At times of vile reflection,
And from the slander and the sun to keep
My credit and complexion.
Thanks, now I must try an imposing state
And hurry this new dress on ;
I hear the squire and parson at the gate,
And I have learned my lesson.

PENELOPE.

Yes, in spite of petty sinnings
Beautiful like her
Who could hardly err,
My Penelope with spinnings
Made of life but fair beginnings,
Sweet philosopher ;
All her life went budding out
Daily, and was nipt with doubt
Ere the evening came ;
All the passion of her bosom,
Never grew to one full blossom
In its scarlet flame.

Yet no pretty purpose altered
In its perfect pose,
Like an opening rose,
And no step once taken faltered,
If with theirs her comrades paltered,
Till its sudden close :
Rich and ready with the morn,
Though the purpose were a thorn
Veiled in velvet mask,
With the rapture of a woman
And a heart divinely human,
She began her task.

Daily she arose in glory
Eager for her loom,
Through the winter gloom,
To resume the broken story ;
She would work with fingers gory,
Duty-led, to doom ;
Strong in faith, and fretting not
At her toil's unfinished lot,
So forlorn and bound ;

As by God Himself anointed,
For some holy work appointed,
Which she never found.

Thus her love was coined in labour
Hourly spent on need,
Calm and constant heed
For the sick and suffering neighbour,
Wounded by the savage sabre
Which is cowards' creed ;
Nothing was completed still,
Though she fought each giant ill
With unbated breath,
Till, as if her life were spinning
But her shroud, the last beginning
Brought in mercy Death.

FAR OFF.

She is fashioned out of all things fair,
Of the moonlight and the morn,
And her mantle is of mountain air
That the tempest has not torn.

She is whiter than the virgin snow,
She is dewy as the dawn,
In the grace of far-off sunset's glow
She is wondrously withdrawn.

For her heart is without strife or stain,
And she quaffs from sacred springs
Of the glorious Love that seeks not gain,
And is fairer crown than kings'.

From her presence every passion flies,
She would conquer Death the slayer,
And the heavens that are her happy eyes
For ever call to prayer.

MY IDEAL.

Dark and fair, dark and fair,
With a neck of snow and midnight hair
Of wavy gleams, as star-lit;
Dark and fair, dark and fair,
With a white, white brow and modest air
And a kissing mouth of scarlet.
Fair and dark, fair and dark,
With the eyes that have a heavenly spark
Of the softest deepest azure;
Fair and dark, fair and dark,
With the shell-like ears that seem to hark
As for only God's good pleasure.

Calm and storm, calm and storm,
With the flowing lines of perfect form
That with perfect movement mingle;
Calm and storm, calm and storm,
With the raptures of all colours warm
That yet paint a passion single.
Storm and calm, storm and calm,
With a voice that falls like magic balm
And a pride that laughs at dangers;
Storm and calm, storm and calm,
Like the wind that wrestles with the palm
In some purple isle of strangers.

Frost and fire, frost and fire,
In the sudden moods of her soul's attire,
When she steps to meet the morning;
Frost and fire, frost and fire,
With the changeful notes of sweet desire
That are one in their adorning.
Fire and frost, fire and frost,
With a breast by each pure feeling tost
That will ope to every comer;

Fire and frost, fire and frost,
By the icy blasts of winter crost
And the scorching breath of summer.

Strong and weak, strong and weak,
With a face that must her spirit speak
And betrays its hidden story ;
Strong and weak, strong and weak,
With the thoughts like shadows on her cheek
In the shifting gloom and glory.
Weak and strong, weak and strong,
In the presence of a coward wrong
As the angel of detection ;
Weak and strong, weak and strong,
Like the quivering parts of a broken song
If the weary ask affection.

A ROSE WITH THORNS.

I know an English rosebud fair
With sunshine hair,
And brown, brown eyes that shyly peep
From fountains deep
To laugh a moment and look down
And feign a frown,
That yet would more than any smile
A saint beguile ;
And then her crimson lips look up,
A honeyed cup,
Beneath those eyes clear as the morn's :
But she has thorns.

Alas, I know them and have felt,
Who vainly knelt,
But drew no nearer than her glove
With all my love
Poured out in passion at her feet,
No love to meet ;

I only proved, when sad and sick,
 The piercing prick ;
 Under the beauty and the bloom,
 That mocked my doom,
 I found (with treasures soft and seen)
 The thorns were keen.

I know an English rosebud bright
 With native light,
 Not with the painted perjured face
 Of borrowed grace ;
 Although she is not kind to me,
 Yet I can see
 Her opening charms that soon will rush
 To their full blush ;
 And love that I may never win
 (If welcomed in)
To blossoms then—in spite of scorns—
 Will change the thorns.

Alas, I know my scanty sheaves
 Were ever leaves,
 And all her fragrance and the hue
 Are others' due ;
 But I am happy yet in this—
 The rosebud's bliss,
 Content the same fresh airs I breathe
 Her lips enwreath ;
 Though *me* she only gives a prick
 Unto the quick,
I swear her thorns are sweeter dowers
 Than any flowers.

FLOS FLORUM.

Flowers I see, that shoot and shine
 And the vilest room refine,
 With a beauty all their own,
 Full of passion and of fire,

Clothed in royallest attire,
Not to kings in splendour known ;
Flowers I see, that laugh and lean
Dainty heads through casements mean,
High above the reach of art,
Breathing as the thoughts of God
To the drudges as they plod,
Lessons for the loving heart.

Flowers I see of noble speech,
Which with words of life beseech
All who go astray to turn—
All who stumble through the dark
In their wild descent to hark,
And within the bosom burn ;
Flowers I see of fancy rare,
Born to gladden worlds of care
And illume the dim lone march,
As they cast upon the cloud
With its shadow like a shroud,
Colours of the rainbow arch.

Flowers I see of dazzling deeds,
Which have sprung divine from seeds
Sown in breasts without a spot,
Watered by the dew of skies
Which the dark hour glorifies
And transforms the poor man's lot ;
Flowers I see of giant acts
Blooming in eternal facts,
By the hand unbent and pure
Struck to make a nation free,
Or to hold the Heaven in fee,
And for evermore endure.

Flowers I see of every kind
Wrought by love or mighty mind,
Which dispel the dungeon's gloom,
And amid the scoffs of scorn

Break in blossom from the thorn,
 Till the very deserts bloom ;
 But the flower to me most dear,
 Jewelled with the sacred tear,
 In its shy and humble pose,
 Innocent of blot or blame
 Blushes on the cheek of shame,
 Reddening to the perfect rose.

AN AUTOCHTHON.

It was not in the slough of a city
 Or the furnace of sweating slaves,
 Where the things of contempt and pity
 Start up from their open graves ;
 And grim with their garments rotten
 Fling words that are cruel as knives—
 The curse of the souls forgotten,
 The hate of the helpless lives ;
 It was not in the ranks of toilers,
 In the riches that bring them dearth—
 To make surer the doom of spoilers,
 I met the daughter of earth.

Not a mænad who meant destruction,
 Not a siren with frailty fond,
 And she asked for no introduction
 But the bliss of our human bond ;
 And her face had the print of the Mother
 Whom alone of her kin she knew,
 With a smile that she could not smother
 And the shade that the sunshine drew ;
 An Autochthon and free and simple
 With the scent of the meadow hay,
 With a kiss in the red red dimple
 And the hue of the homely clay.
 And a rent had revealed the bosom
 Through her frock as it sweetly swelled,

Were it not for a bunch of blossom,
 Though it rose and in vain rebelled ;
 And she stood in the summer morning
 With her strong bright freshness fair,
 And her brow had not one adorning
 But the crown of her dusky hair ;
 As if sprung from the earth in glory
 And arrayed in a crimson coil,
 Just to tell me the young world story,
 While she smacked of the kindly soil.

And her station I never reckoned,
 I uncovered my head and bowed,
 As the brown brown fingers beckoned
 And the eyes my eyes allowed ;
 What she said, what I gave not chidden,
 Though in Heaven it all had part,
 Is a secret that must be hidden
 Which I keep to my happy heart ;
 I was man, and she but woman
 Who in me had reposed her trust,
 We were both of us fond and human
 And we both would return to dust.

THE AWKWARD PRINCESS.

They say a fairy, at her birth,
 Which was of lofty station,
 Laid on her like an iron girth
 An awful incantation ;
 And when the doctor turned his head,
 She tied with dark obliquity
 Around one royal toe a thread,
 A piece of red iniquity ;
 And all the nurses of the lands,
 Though in the best condition,
 Could not, with all their cunning hands,
 Improve her sad position.

And so she grew a clumsy child,
In spite of love maternal,
And made the house a Bedlam wild
With antics quite infernal ;
She tore to tatters all her clothes,
She laughed at bib and bottle,
And with suspicious sounds like oaths
Her father tried to throttle ;
And once, and this is really true,
When lying in the cradle,
She beat the nursemaid black and blue
With the best silver ladle.

But though she waxed more awkward yet,
The queen upon her doted,
And offered many a prayer and threat
Before she was short-coated ;
The doctors she had called to prove,
Flocked out of every nation,
But could not with their magic move
That red abomination ;
And, when her grand relations came
With sugar-plums and kissed her,
With finger-nails that knew no shame,
She pinched them like a blister.

And so they brought a bishop next,
A man of light and leading,
Whose face was like a heavenly text,
And pale with midnight reading ;
Who learnèd was in tongues that closed
With the most crabbèd vowels,
And guttural languages, and those
That rumble in the bowels ;
But, ah, she gave a horrid whack
His gouty foot, it may be
Without a thought, and sent him back
Exclaiming, " Bless the baby ! "

But as she throve and bigger grew
And got more varied wishes,
Into a thousand fragments flew
About her plates and dishes ;
For everywhere she flung her arms,
That stretched out daily stronger—
They left a trail of grievous harms,
And daily worse and longer ;
Her sisters, if they would not yield,
She tumbled down in mockery,
Her path was like a battlefield
Of broken heads and crockery.

She spoiled each month a dozen hats,
And lost a score of mittens,
While treading on a hundred cats
And thrice a hundred kittens ;
She soiled so many frocks a week
That pan, and tub, and copper
Began at such a strain to leak,
And could not wash them proper ;
She trampled over baby too,
And all pet toys and treasures,
She quite wore out her every shoe
And baffled Crispin's measures.

She hourly led her nurse a dance
Across the chairs and tables,
Down cellars grim with ghosts' romance,
And into sties and stables ;
She climbed through hedges and up trees
And made her hair a muddle,
Went sprawling on her hands and knees
Right in the dirtiest puddle ;
She ever came back wet and stained,
Reproved by prudes and clerics,
Her sisters all in tears and pained,
The servants in hysterics.

But when at last in dire distress,
To give her tongue a bridle,
They brought a solemn governess,
She only grew more idle ;
The ink she emptied down her neck
And smeared her face with ochre,
And made her costly cap a wreck,
Burnt with a red-hot poker ;
Till scared and worried and abused,
That sad and sapient lady
Politely begged to be excused,
And took a seat more shady.

The queen then rent her radiant hair,
The question was so tragic,
And in the depth of her despair
She tried all sorts of magic ;
She felt her daughter was bewitched
With that base red impiety,
That never now could be unstitched
By any known sobriety ;
She cast black powders in the fire,
And burnt the bluest candle,
And made her pages all perspire,
But could not stop the scandal.

At length, the Lady of the Loves
Sped to her ceaseless knockings,
And bought a pair of golden gloves,
A pair of silver stockings ;
A rosebud and a thorn, a bond
Of flame, the snow's protection,
And to a royal suitor fond
Turned that wild heart's affection.
Then when she looked into his eyes
And one sweet word was spoken,
The world became new earth and skies,
And the dark spell was broken.

But now her fingers once all thumbs
Grew soft and nice and nimble,
And fed the dicky-birds with crumbs
Or wore the dainty thimble ;
They played the zither and the harp,
Or stroked old lord and lady
When gouty pains fell on them sharp
In bedroom shy and shady ;
They combed her Arab's mane for rides
With kind and tender touches,
Or patted down the suffering sides
Of reverend dean and duchess.

She nursed the baby in its crib,
And often brought the wee thing
A lump of sugar or a bib,
To help it in its teething ;
And mothers (seeking a new gown)
Who their own children dandled,
Had never seen in all the town
A baby better handled ;
Till even dirty Bess, who stormed
Against her, to the laundry
Turned her attention and reformed,
And gave up polyandry.

The maids and dogs no longer winced,
When they beheld her progress,
For fear of being mauled or minced,
As if she were an ogress ;
The pussycats around her played
While daily waxing purrier,
Assured they now would not be flayed
By her as by a furrier ;
And all the owls with all their winks
Came to her evening classes,
While geese and donkeys had high jinks
With fair blue-buskined lasses.

The cups and saucers did not crack,
Or cut a hundred capers
Whene'er she passed and strew her track
With stories for the Papers;
Sweet roses by her feet were sown,
And from her lips dropped jewels
And pearls of wisdom never known,—
Unless the mighty Whewell's;
And this was wrought by radiant love,
Which turns to lamb tough mutton,
And fitted her just like a glove
That no one can unbutton.

THE HAPPY PRINCESS.

They say a Fairy brought one morn
A basketful of blisses,
When little Wendeline was born,
With honeydew and kisses;
A basketful of pretty things,
The biggest plums and pleasures,
Bewitching dolls and wondrous rings,
And all the last new treasures;
Rare morsels only meant for *her*,
Of magic songs and simples,
A snood of snowy gossamer,
A cup of tears and dimples.
But then the Princess had to choose
Among this vast variety,
From golden crowns to baby shoes
And sugar in satiety;
Whate'er she liked would be her own,
She could be rich or clever,
Have beauty such as was not known,
Or almost live for ever;
She might have monarchs at her feet,
To hand her silver dishes—
To pave her pathway smooth and sweet,
And sate her wildest wishes.

And so the Princess, nothing moved
By this enchanting vision,
As though she had temptation proved,
Was prompt in her decision ;
She did not even ask her fate,
If there were trouble after,
Nor for one moment hesitate
Betwixt the love and laughter ;
But without sadness, without fears
Of evil arts or wiling,
She took the blessed cup of tears
And boldly drank it, smiling.

She chose the thorny road of grief
Which Science vainly smothers,
If she might give the lost relief,
And spend her life for others ;
And then the Fairy kissed her thrice,
She left her toys and dresses,
Black pearls and diamonds and white mice
And cradles like caresses ;
She promised her the brightest part,
Till she grew gray and cappy,
And, while she kept a loving heart,
She should be loved and happy.

Then, lo, to crown the tender child
Who took the nobler duty
And through her tears on suffering smil'd,
Flashed wealth and wit and beauty ;
For what she touched turned into gold,
And all that badness hinders
Became for her a help and hold
And jewels peeped from cinders ;
And lilies leapt up at her feet,
As at St. Leonard's paces,
While roses rained from thorns to greet
Her path with boundless graces.

And now, whenever sorrow laid
On breasts its burning trial,
The Princess flew to offer aid
With noble self-denial ;
There was no baby in the land,
No beggar dropt in ditches,
That did not feel her coaxing hand
And share her choicest riches ;
And if the mother could not sleep,
Or food was scarce and scrappy,
The Princess only had to weep
And every one was happy.

And to her cradle bird and beast
Flocked by some sapient presage,
To draw from her a dainty feast
Or a more dainty message ;
The owl, sore wounded in the trap,
And many a mangled pigeon,
Found healing in her loving lap
And warmth of real religion ;
The donkeys with the longest ears,
So bruised they scarce could clamber,
Yet gathered comfort from her tears
Right in the royal chamber.

And as she wiser, fairer grew,
The years her sweetness heightened,
That wrought the serest life anew,
The darkest bosom brightened ;
The prisoner behind cruel bars,
Who saw her shadow only,
Forgot the night she changed to stars,
And felt not lost and lonely ;
And dogs that wicked were and wild,
Could now no more be snappy,
If once the Princess wept and smiled,
Who made the world more happy.

And pussies used to tender play,
For ladies' laps to cherish,
And petted only yesterday—
Now basely left to perish
Out in the bitter rain and wind
By pangs of terror shaken,
And staring blankly at the blind,
Forgotten and forsaken—
If the good Princess dropt one tear,
Found open breasts and purses,
With others glad to call them dear
And be the kindest nurses.

The cab-horse with its filmy eye,
Crushed down by iron rigour,
When thoughtful Wendeline went by,
Woke to its early vigour;
Remembered not the mouldy corn,
The curse and cruel beating,
And all the burden and the scorn
Hour after hour repeating;
It knew no more the aching head,
The knees so bruised and chappy,
And, as she wept and smiling spread
A feast, grew plump and happy.

The starving seamstress, pure and proud,
Who yet had wealth for giving,
While ever working at the shroud
That was her daily living—
Perched in her little attic lone
Among the tiles and sparrows,
And looking down on hearts of stone,
On cares and costers' barrows—
Yet, when the Princess smiled and wept,
Drew comfort sweet and sappy
From her great love, and softly slept,
And in her dreams was happy.

Yes, all the withered, lame and blind,
The dumb and the unblest'd, a
Great crowd of impotent mankind,
Bathed in her love's Bethesda ;
The troubled waters of her care,
That was as wise as Goschen,
And did what none but angels dare,
Girt every land like ocean ;
The squeaking things, and things that crept,
And creatures finned and flappy,
Though dying, when she smiled and wept,
Expired in odour happy.

THE BUSY PRINCESS.

They say a Fairy fond of toil,
Who in the workshop lingers
And likes a little honest soil,
Put magic in her fingers ;
And gave a wreath of snowy thread
That youthful fancy wheedles,
To tiny Princess Winifred,
And hedged her round with needles ;
And said, on hearing her first cry,
Her hands should be her fortune,
And wicked arts that others ply,
Should vainly her importune.

And thus the baby knew no joys
In pleasure sights or cymbals,
But took to sewing, and her toys
Were only tapes and thimbles ;
She robed her nurse in rabbit skins,
And promptly made her push on
By studding her with dreadful pins,
As if she were a cushion ;
Though never did she mean her harm
Or mock her like a slattern,
But simply wished to try her arm
At some new point or pattern.

Her sisters idled out the day,
And in the sunlight sported,
Or romped through merry miles of play
By cats and dogs escorted ;
But, though their tears were freely shed
And dried with music after,
Yet had the Princess Winifred
No time for grief or laughter ;
Yes, *they* might gaily smile or weep
Or mow from masks and visors,
She laboured on, and even in sleep
Cut pretty shapes with scissors.

And as she older, stronger grew,
Her light would not be smothered,
All servants to her side she drew
And each domestic mothered ;
She helped the housemaid with her broom,
The butler at his table,
And gave five minutes to the groom
Who whistled in the stable ;
At laundry tubs she had a bout,
And garden lore was rich in,
And turned as good a pudding out
As Monsieur in the kitchen.

Her hands were busy through the town
And gave bald heads a lustre,
And rubbed men's dirty measures down
With besom and with duster ;
While politicians were in bed
Or laying on the butter,
Swilled out the Princess Winifred
Their Parliamentary gutter ;
She burnished all the rusty Boards
And patched the country's banners,
And taught the lazy House of Lords
To mend their broken manners.

She did not care for dancing dames
And only turned to troubles,
When other children were at games
Or blowing soapy bubbles ;
She polished up the royal crown,
And saw the fires had fuel
And aired her mother's morning gown,
Or made her evening gruel ;
She did not wince at menial tasks
That people said were shocking,
Drew beer for beggars out of casks
And darned their coat or stocking.

The grand old Premier could not call,
Unless he washed her poodle,
Or wound her worsted in a ball,
Or brushed some waif or noodle ;
The stoutest clergy kicked and fled
And burst their pious traces,
When active Princess Winifred
Would put them through their paces ;
Men who did not that pastime choose,
Who blazoned were with medals,
Were sent to black her walking shoes,
Or slave at sewing pedals.

When came in majesty and might
To woo her kingly lovers,
She set them all to making bright
The dishes and their covers ;
She bade them scrub the palace floors
And scour the rusty iron,
Or oil the hinges of the doors
Instead of reading Byron ;
She gave them labour hard to do,
And would not have a sloven—
To carry coal and break it too,
Or heat the biggest oven.

And so she laboured night and day
While noble idlers jested,
Though the infection had its way
And not a person rested ;
The carpenter, the cobbler sped,
If folks grew tired and nodded,
Except the Princess Winifred,
Who some with needles prodded ;
She never spared her purse or pains,
And helped the nurses tubbing,
Or swept the cobwebs from their brains,
Till all the world was scrubbing.

The plates and dishes, not by chance,
Whene'er they heard her coming,
Forsook their racks and led a dance,
Pianos went off strumming ;
The wheels of every mine and mill,
The steam in forge and factory,
Now were not for a moment still—
For who could be refractory ?
No hands and feet could ever stop
And spun their workings wider,
While every house became a shop,
And every man a spider.

She corresponded with all lands
In all their tongues and tenses,
And kept a hundred scribbling hands
Of smart amanuenses ;
Her letters each on its own shelf
Were pigeon-holed and sorted,
She had an office for herself
And every tale reported ;
She let a thousand pages loose—
Whate'er might be the weather—
To gather quills, till not a goose
Had left a single feather.

Her private wires ran south and north,
Her cables crossed the oceans,
And groaning did the mails go forth
To flash her fertile notions ;
She daily got the earliest news
And daily sent the latest,
From roaring marts to pious pews
Where humbugs sit sedatest ;
Her recipes for making jams,
Or draining Bogs Sirbonian,
Her postcards and her telegrams
Were really quite Gladstonian.

And ready stood a hundred steeds
Saddled, with bit and bridle,
For couriers to make known her needs,
That none should dare be idle ;
She babbled in a myriad tones
Of toiling and mendicity,
Used endless trains and telephones
And harnessed electricity ;
Flew carrier pigeons for her sake,
And lectured every college
On every theme, but could not slake
Her boundless thirst for knowledge.

The very cats and dogs were set
To work at wise professions,
And better than most Christians met
The lures to base transgressions ;
The tiniest kit, the poorest pup,
She trained in useful courses,
To turn their little noses up
At bets and racing horses ;
And tuned by the terrestrial George
She made with sweetest *bonhomie*
Her every field a patent forge,
To teach the new Economy.

THE INQUISITIVE PRINCE.

They say a Fairy with four eyes,
In place of sham pomposity,
When dropt Prince Aubrey from the skies
Gave him her curiosity ;
Endowed him with a scorn of fools,
And in his heart of wonder
Shut up a box of magic tools,
To rive the rocks asunder ;
That thus all secrets he might know,
The tricks of every nation,
The things above, the things below,
By serious observation.

Inductive, eager, from the first
He paid most marked attention
To bottles, when he slaked his thirst,
And would have new inventions ;
Betwixt the pages and the pugs
He daily formed comparison,
With showers of brushes and of jugs,
To daunt the bravest garrison ;
The hardness of the nurses' backs
And boots he often tested,
And smothering maids with fearful sacks
His baby powers invested.

He wanted once a helpless jade
To slice in vulgar fractions,
Only to mark how she was made—
The meaning of her actions ;
And into cupboards full of jam,
Down cellars, up the churches,
While doors could nothing do but slam,
He pushed his rapt researches ;
He tumbled into water-butts,
Was drowned and boiled and baken,
In quest of sugar and short cuts,
And into wisdom shaken.

No scrap of rubbish came amiss,
No bit of glass or iron,
He always ready was to kiss
Or carve the sweetest Siren ;
He took the jewels from the crown
And hacked the throne to sections,
And fried a nice fat baby brown,
In spite of interjections ;
But no one had a warmer heart
And no one had a bigger,
For a neglected toy or tart,
A casual knife or nigger.

When to maturer years he came
He was not more pacific,
His ardent soul grew all aflame
With fury scientific ;
He sent the courtiers into fits
Of terror, though he simply meant
To train their little minds by bits
With some new murderous implement ;
The fatter samples oft he packed
In pickle-jar and crucible,
And to its final atoms cracked
Whatever was reducible.

Experimenting night and day
He hardly ate his rations,
But with his scalpel worked away
On cats and poor relations ;
Colonial bishops he found cheap,
Though some with tears objected,
And stale old statesmen in a heap
He bought and vivisected ;
He tried his theories upon man
And dog and dunce and rabbits,
And cooked in chemists' awful pan
Home Rulers with bad habits.

He burrowed into beggars' heads
With gimlets' penetration,
If he might trace the nervous threads
Or signs of cerebration ;
The mystery of the pineal gland
He probed with busy needle,
And laid a meditative hand
Upon the parish beadle ;
And when (to joys of science dull)
Came in the royal hatter,
Prince Aubrey opened his poor skull
To study the grey matter.

Beneath his philanthropic knife
Fell wretches who wrote hymnals,
Or stirred up theologic strife
And played the part of Simnells ;
But though he wanted to be just
And poked with patience double,
Mere cobwebs of old Fathers' dust
Alone repaid his trouble ;
For with his long laborious pains
Repose and food denying,
He found no vestige there of brains
With all his quantifying.

He watched the wincing of the knaves
Beneath the force of blisters,
Who wedded even over graves
Their poor deceased wives' sisters ;
He listened with judicial ear
To their pretentious platitudes,
And put a little wholesome fear
Into their wormy attitudes ;
And bade them turn to nobler creeds
From squirmings of obscurity,
That widened with such wicked deeds
The circle of impurity.

But on himself he always tried
First every curious question,
Daily was carved, and bled, and died,
In search of a digestion ;
Elixirs, potions, by the score,
That better were for foemen,
He would at awful risk explore
And test in his abdomen ;
He took what pills the market gave,
Pursuing some idea,
But to discover a new grave
In each new panacea.

He braved the fury of the fire,
And proved the upper classes,
When stript of just their gay attire,
Were only dirt and gases ;
And though he often spared the weak,
Himself he gave no quarter,
And crucial tests would hourly wreak
In iced or boiling water ;
Before the doctors could arrive
To offer wise inspection,
He buried was in earth alive
And made a resurrection.

He fasted fifty days, and beat
The biggest record hollow,
And would not let his friends retreat
But called on them to follow ;
He tried all heresies and foods,
Socinian sauce and Arian,
And flitted from his fleshy moods
To courses vegetarian ;
He blenched not at the wildest plan,
The hardest nut or strawberry,
The queerest morsel, view or man,
Was nothing to Prince Aubrey.

With cunning tools he toiled amain,
 With acids he corroded,
 And if he erred he tried again
 Till someone was exploded ;
 He turned the palace to a pot
 With servants boiled successive,
 And if they grumbled it was hot
 He called them unprogressive ;
 He burnt three-quarters of the town
 To prove the power of smashes,
 And then in placid joy sat down
 And analysed the ashes.

And when his brothers brought a wife
 In hopes they might have nieces,
 He married her, and took his knife
 And snipt her into pieces ;
 For none, the loftiest in the land
 Or of a lowly station,
 Were safe from his inquiring hand
 And keen evisceration ;
 Till subjects all were of the past,
 Which scarcely was surprising,
 And on himself he fell at last
 And died philosophising.

NURSE.

Dorcas, womanly, and fervent
 For her precious children's sake,
 All a friend and all a servant,
 Is the model you should take ;
 Full of innocent devices
 She the little ones entices
 To the refuge of her arms,
 With her plain and kindly charms
 As with costly bribes no other,
 Still for better and for worse,
 All a queen and all a mother ;
 Greet her warmly—this is Nurse.

Angel heart and strength of giant
 She embraces in one form,
And on loving gifts reliant
 Stills the tumult of the storm ;
When the hungry pets at table
Make confusion bad as Babel,
 She is ready for the hour
 And maintains her modest power,
Till is hushed the wildest billow
 With a playful quip or verse,
And some culprit finds a pillow
 On the bosom of dear Nurse.

None may know but she the trial
 At her sad and silent post,
And the constant stern denial
 Of the rest she covets most—
All the long and sleepless coping
With the fever against hoping,
 Through the dark and endless night,
 In a patience more than might,
While the force of life did battle
 With the blackness of the curse,
When the babe had ceased to prattle—
 None can really tell but Nurse.

Oh, she is a daily wonder
 Of endurance wise and calm,
To excuse the careless blunder
 Or apply the healing balm
On the wounded frame or feeling,
And beside her charges kneeling
 To outpour her jealous care
 In a tender tide of prayer ;
Yes, and to their touch magnetic
 Opens out her slender purse,
With each birthday sympathetic—
 Blessed among women, Nurse.

THE HOUSEMAID.

Upstairs in a corner shady
Of the passage long and shy,
In the bedroom of the lady,
And with business in her eye,
Sweeping, dusting,
And disgusting
Spiders at their curious toil,
Lest the cobwebs leave some soil,
And at labours quite Titanic
In her pink and dainty dress,
See my tidy and tyrannic
Housemaid, Bess.

Ah, the earwigs know how savage
She can be in serious mood,
If one moment they would ravage
Through her realm in quest of food ;
Brisk and bustling,
In her rustling
Print she seems to scent afar
Any stain or door ajar,
And with all a zealot's unction
Traps the beetles at a guess,
And destroys without compunction ;
Cruel Bess.

Never queen so swayed a sceptre
In her gilded prison gloom,
Or at ruling was adept
Than this despot of the broom ;
In the border
Of disorder
With the flagrant blot or brand,
Bringing with her moulding hand
Method and its grace harmonious,
Over wardrobe and the press
Reigning proud and ceremonious,
Royal Bess.

True she is, but rarely tender,
While she puts in heaven her trust,
Haloed with the homely splendour
Of the raised and routed dust ;
Fired by duty,
Bright with beauty
Of a mission from her God,
Treading as she ever trod
Conquering to her goal domestic,
Equal to the hour and stress,
And in little tasks majestic,
Glorious Bess.

A LADY'S MAID.

Wise opinions well may vary
Of all persons and all things,
But who can deny that Mary
Is an angel without wings ?
To and fro she softly flutters,
And at morn unbars the shutters,
With so delicate a hand,
Opening out the misty meadow
And the oaks about the land
Which in guardian glory stand,
That she looks a heavenly shadow,
Not a servant to command.

Yet, my sweet and honoured madam,
If she in your chamber trod,
You would find this child of Adam
Also was a child of God ;
While her every modest motion
Is an act of pure devotion
To the Present Master paid,
And the deft and dainty fingers
Flashing with the needle's aid
O'er the frock for mending laid,
Work for Him for whom she lingers,
Though a simple lady's maid.

Once a lord of line illustrious,
 Smitten by her lovely face,
 As she passed with steps industrious
 And her strange unearthly grace,
 Deeming her as lightly taken
 As a bird by serpent shaken
 From the refuge of its perch,
 Asked the way that was the nearest
 To her bedroom, though the search
 Would her sacred honour smirch
 And destroy the treasure dearest ;
 But she answered, " Through the church ".

Her's may be a portion shady,
 Life a poor unnoticed lot,
 Yet is she a perfect lady
 And without a fear or spot ;
 For the crown of maiden meetness
 Gives to her its grand completeness,
 If on her no jewels shine ;
 Though she has a lowly station,
 Flowers of faith around her twine,
 Gems of love her mien refine,
 Royal robes of consecration
 Are her own by right Divine.

THE NURSERY GOVERNESS.

On the threshold of two lands,
 Joining both with useful hands
 Trained to bring in perfect order
 From the rule of chaos wild,
 Here a wardrobe, there a child,
 But a tenant of the border ;
 Though she does no duty ill,
 And her fingers have a skill
 Not to be attained by money,
 Conscious of a secret might
 She, who craves a bolder flight,
 Longs for Canaan's milk and honey.

Half a servant, half a queen,
 And two jarring worlds between,
 Still she looks across like Moses
 From the height of labour wrought,
 On the wings of wistful thought,
 To the realm of bliss and roses ;
 In her little sphere of frocks,
 Pinafores and pretty socks,
 Mabel five years old and fervent
 And yet younger Maude she sways,
 On first lessons' pictured ways,
 Half a queen and half a servant.

Sensitive and shy and proud,
 Like a star behind a cloud,
 For a second rays revealing
 Of an orb without a mote,
 Which a careless eye would note,
 Then again its light concealing ;
 Sometimes from a girlish dream,
 Not devoid of fruit and cream,
 Up she starts and goes forth brisker,
 To retire within her print,
 At the very faintest hint
 Of an aggravating whisker.

Nurse admires her, calls her smart,
 Keeps for her the crispest tart,
 And employs her clever needle
 For that bonnet of gay straw,
 Which inspires a deeper awe
 Than the cocked hat of the beadle ;
 Baker gives her furtive looks,
 Butcher reads romantic books
 And for her his fatling slaughters ;
 Their despair she does not guess,
 If a nursery governess
 Yet the flower of England's daughters.

BABYDOM.

Babies do, as children guess,
 Come from God right out of Heaven,
 And are then to parents given
 In their pretty mortal dress,
 Sweet as souls just newly shriven,
 Pink and white deliciousness.

Babies come
 From our Home,
 Soft, round, warm, and blessèd things,
 Angels, though they leave their wings
 At earth's portal,
 When they take
 Garments mortal
 For our sake.

Yet when nobody is by,
 They resume their wings and fly,
 In a quiver
 And a shiver,
 With a rustle
 And a bustle

Of the most bewitching joy,
 As if life were but a toy.

I have seen,
 I have been
 Hiding near them, when they spread
 Golden plumes about their head,
 And their rosebud lips shone out
 With a red and restless pout,
 And their eyes'
 Ecstasies

Gave a glory and a hue
 Such as is not in the blue
 Sky with all its summer due,
 Without cloud, and without clue
 For the fancies
 Of romances.

I have watched them with a sigh—
 With a sigh,
 Mounting upward, floating high—
 Floating high,
 With a motion
 Quite devotion;
 Or did God draw dearly nigh—
 Dearly nigh,
 Like the ocean?
 Till I truly could not tell—
 It was so ineffable—
 And I really did not know,
 Lying very far below,
 In the lovelinesses bright,
 Which was Baby, which was light.
 Hoary sages,
 Who the stages
 Of the ages,
 Print on pages,
 Long, and learned, and profound,
 Would our simple faith confound,
 When with pompous words they draw
 Man from beast by iron law.
 But the Love,
 Beyond doubt
 Lord above,
 They leave out.
 We say only what we see,
 What is certain, what must be,
 What the waves and breezes blow—
 Woodlands whisper, what we know.
 Science goes its ponderous way
 While we wonder, while we pray
 Science will
 Keep earth's leaven,
 Babies still
 Come from Heaven.
 Sages with their heads in dust

Miss the stars that shine on trust,
 And with cruel
 Piercing goad,
 Kill the jewel
 In the toad ;
They arose from earth, it may be,
 God alone could make the Baby.
 Winsome dear wee fluffy thing—
 Fluffy thing,
 With the hands that climb and cling—
 Climb and cling,
 And yet hardly show the knuckle,
 Like the scented honey-suckle
 As it winds about and clambers
 To its leafy upper chambers ;
 Hands that do
 Fondly woo,
 Cling and climb
 As they chime
 With the feeling of the hour,
 Turning as the sunward flower
 For some new and surer place
 On the yet untravelled face,
 Which is an enchanted shore
 For the fingers to explore,
 And with all their baby art
 Twining love-links round the heart,
 Binding with a thousand ties
 Tenderness that never dies ;
 Hands that double
 Joys, and trouble
 Turn to blisses
 As with kisses,
 And hold out when others fly
 Anchors from eternity.
 Ah, the little lips rise up
 Like a little crimson cup,
 Round and ready

And unsteady,
As if bursting,
As if thirsting
For your petting and caress,
In their utter helplessness.
Don't you see
That pure sight,
Seraphs free
Watch in Light?
Would you, could you turn away
Or a moment span delay,
Were you crying,
Were you flying
From an armèd host's array,
Were you dying;
When you noted that full gaze
Of inquiry and amaze,
In its awful innocence
Turned on *you*,
Big with simple confidence
Through and through?
And yet devils,
To their shame,
In mad revels
Without name,
Seared and sunken,
Damned and drunken,
Babies maim;
And the mother and the woman,
Half Divine and not all human,
Babies harm
And alarm,
Babies take
And forsake,
Babies starve
While they carve
Steps to hell
Terrible,

Babies curse
While they nurse,
Babies hate
Left to fate
And all ill—
Babies kill.

But, though baby-slayers go
To the bourne of endless woe,
As they fell,
Babies, just to help them live
And some cool sweet comfort give,
Hear their knell,
And at seasons fugitive
Go as well.

Have you marked a Baby's feet,
Each pink toe
Wonderfully wrought and sweet,
To and fro,
Glancing up and glancing down,
Never still

For the laughter or the frown
Forced by will?

Sculptor, painter, poet, none
Could portray the charms of one
Baby foot
Lightly put
Here and there,
Everywhere,

Like a snowflake, like a bud
That has never heard of mud,
Never seen a single speck,
Purer than the swan's pure neck,
Which when really put down quite
In its virgin freshness white,
Makes us tremble

Though we would
Fear dissemble,
If we could;

Which in mischief and in mirth
On all lands
Conquering stands,
And sends echoes through the earth.
Have you marked a Baby's eye
Which came forth when God went by,
Just to take a little look
At that beauteous Picture Book,
And got there from what it saw
Angel rapture, human awe?
Mark it well,
And the spell
That does gladden spirits lost
And on fiery surges tost,
Where flames dwell,
And does glorify and turn
Or make new
Thoughts that crucify and burn,
Into dew.
Do you love a Baby's eye
With the sweetness of the sky
After rain,
Deep as deep Infinity
Without stain?
O it speaks a language known
Not to mortals, of its own;
Soft as flowers
On the Maker's pathway strown,
Washed with showers.
Do you love a Baby's eye,
That your will
Asks with wistful laughter shy?
Love it still.
Have you marked a Baby's ear,
Which stole out when none was near
But the angels with their wings,
Just to hear their silver strings,
As they rang,

As they sang
Of the higher thoughts and things,
Ere to holy communings
 They upsprang?
Half a blossom, half a shell,
 All of gold,
Carved in ways ineffable,
 Manifold;
Ah, it has the rose's curve,
 And a colour
 Nowise duller,
Yet does not a hair's breadth swerve
 From the duty
 Owed to beauty.
And within that mystic seat—
 Mystic seat,
Melodies of ages beat—
 Ages beat,
And the music of all times—
 Of all times,
Rippling rill and lispings lea—
 Lispings lea,
There for ever chants and chimes—
 Chants and chimes,
With the murmur of the sea—
 Of the sea,
Breaking gently on the shore—
 On the shore,
 Evermore,
 Evermore.
Babies go and Babies come,
Cooing, kind, and cuddlesome;
 If they suck
 Tiny thumbs,
 Crusts or crumbs,
 Each a duck,
 Someone's pet
 When they fall,
 When they call,

Though they fret,
 Babies yet,
 Babies all;
 Babies thin and Babies fat,
 Babies none would dare to pat,
 Babies dark and Babies fair,
 Babies with the haloed hair,
 Babies short and Babies long,
 Babies weak and Babies strong,
 Babies white and Babies pink,
 Babies who but sleep and drink,
 Babies purring, Babies pleased,
 Babies smiling still though teased,
 Babies far too proud to walk,
 Babies ripe for fun and talk,
 Babies kept within no girth,
 All *from* Heaven and all *for* earth.

L'Envoi.

Babies past and Babies present
 And to be,
 Without whom no life were pleasant
 Life or free;
 Without whom no house were furnished,
 Nothing sweet,
 And no table rightly burnished
 Or complete;
 To your cry
 Dearer than the call of doves,
 Full of all delights and loves,
 Now bye-bye.

THE WHITE BABY.

I.

Sweetest thing God ever made,
 Carven out of shine and shade
 And of gold;
 Brimming o'er with love and life,

Hope and fear and mimic strife,
 Now so cold—
 Now so cold;
 Could'st not thou yet longer stay
 While the dew was on the day,
 Baby dear,
 Once a smile that books might fill
 With its meaning, not a still
 Frozen tear?
 Never will I dare to think
 All those breathing roses pink,
 That pure head,
 With the sunshine glad and fair,
 Tangled in its crownèd hair
 Can be *dead*.
 Whither hast thou taken flight,
 For an hour or for a night,
 Baby bold?
 Thou art busy in strange lands
 With those wee soft sceptred hands,
 Now so cold—
 Now so cold.

2.

Sweetest joy in earth or sky,
 Born for nothing but to fly,
 With the plan
 Of the angels who are flame,
 Binding in one tiny frame
 God and man;
 Far above our thoughts and things
 With the glory of thy wings
 Strong as fire,
 Soaring up to fields of love
 Whence the roses came, above
 Our desire;
 Thou did'st never stoop to walk,

And thy wisest baby talk
 Mocked our ears
 With a melody not known,
 But the angels' and thine own,
 Past the years.
 Lilies' lustre, waters' chime,
 Bliss and blossom of all time,
 Nectar'd grape,
 Curve and colour as of flowers,
 Gave thee with those dainty dowers
 Shine and shape.

3.

Baby, calm, and terrible
 In thy mystic miracle,
 More than life,
 More than beauty in the charms
 Of the chiseled brow and arms
 From the knife
 Of the Almighty Sculptor fresh,
 Bodied into conscious flesh,
 Perfect form,
 Snow and bud and spirit blent
 All with dew and motion lent
 By the storm ;
 As upon thy gifts I gaze,
 Backward rolls the mortal haze,
 Time past count,
 And I see the solemn sun
 In its endless race begun
 At the fount.
 In thy compass comes to be
 All the world's epitome,
 All its grace ;
 And, behind the painted shell,
 Bowed alike on heaven and hell
 God's own face.

4.

Sweetest thing eye ever saw,
 Delicatest, without flaw,
 In the mould
 Wherein work alone is cast
 Meant like God Himself to last,
 Art thou cold—
 Art thou cold ?
 Art thou dreaming, or afar
 In some dim and distant star,
 Baby mine,
 Where the angels vigil keep
 And about thy blessed sleep
 Moonbeams twine ?
 Wonderful art thou and white,
 And the spell is infinite
 Round thee spread ;
 And those feet divinely wrought,
 More than music, swift as thought,
 Are not *dead*.
We are dreaming, *we* who die,
 And the shadows only lie,
 Truth has told ;
 When at last the shadows break,
 Thou with us will brightly wake ;
 We are cold—
 We are cold.

MAUDIE.

Maudie often looks so nice,
 Looks so nice,
 Marvellously meek as mice,
 Meek as mice
 When they are on mischief bent,
 With the sweetness of a saint
 And a smile of calm content
 As if far from evil taint,

And is so demurely drest
That she seems the very best
 Of all lasses ;
 And the masses
Of her hair that tumbles down
Grow into a saintly crown,
 Like the olden
 Haloes golden.
But I know my Maudie well,
Every turn and every tittle,
 Every fault
Which I never mean to tell,
And I take her with a little
 Pinch of salt ;
That is why—but do not tell her !—
I still keep my big salt cellar.

Maudie has a classic face—
 Classic face,
And the kind of sculptured grace—
 Sculptured grace,
With those grave and measured looks,
 Which we read in pictures pale
And in mighty antique books
 With a dim and distant tale,
As if she herself had kept
Company with these and stept
 From their glory
 To the story
Of our mean and prosy times,
Not forgetting the old chimes ;
 Like a statue
 Which looks at you,
With the same unruffled pose
And the same serene expression
 Of the eyes,
And the same provoking nose
Turned above our weak transgression

To the skies ;
Modern modes may cramp and skimp us,
Maudie dwells upon Olympus.

Maudie has her pretty ways—

Pretty ways,

If at times she lightly strays—

Lightly strays ;

When was there a child so quick

To anticipate a need,

If the paper, or my stick,

Or the Athanasian creed

For the proper service set,

Which perhaps I might forget ?

And her presage

For a message

Is unearthly, and I vow

She can trace it on my brow

As if uttered

There, or buttered

On her bread or on my own ;

And for finding lost umbrellas

Or a stool,

Never was her equal known

In the last and best Mundella's

Model School.

Ah ! she is as keen and canny

As the greatest old great-granny.

Maudie is a borrowed child—

Borrowed child,

And her manners quaint and mild,

Quaint and mild,

Take demurely that or this,

Lazy couch or climbing stair,

Corrigenda or a kiss,

With the same untroubled air ;

For she has enchanting gleams

Of her Indian home in dreams,
 Wondrous odours
 And pagodas
 Underneath the pillared palm,
 In their immemorial calm.
 But she flashes
 Out of sashes,
 And of knowledge, and of frocks,
 With a most amazing splutter
 Now and then,
 Like an earthquake in the shock
 She inflicts on shelf and shutter,
 Mice and men ;
 Mixing with her fiery leaven
 Tongs and tables, earth and heaven.

DREAMLAND.

Sometimes in the evening hour—
 Evening hour,
 When the drowsy lights are low—
 Lights are low,
 Sudden fancies burst in flower
 'Twixt the glooming and the glow ;
 And they make,
 And they take
 All the most surprising forms,
 Birds and blossoms white and red,
 Butterflies and bees in swarms
 Like a cloud in glory shed ;
 And I wonder,
 And I wonder,
 Till the gates that shadows close
 Burst asunder,
 Burst asunder
 Like the petals of a rose.
 And bright shapes,
 Owls and apes,

Shining babes and shrouded things,
Children naked and with wings,
Children tied to leading strings,
Children crowned as queens and kings
Flash and flutter
In with utter
Mirth and mischief to and fro,
Through the shutter;
As the firelights' ebb and flow
Spit and sputter;
While they mutter
Spells and charms about me throw.
Owls as solemn
As the column
Of a church,
With a winking
And a blinking
On me perch;
Apes as serious
And mysterious
As a sage,
Read my feelings'
Last revealings
Like a page.
Ah, they flop above and flout me,
Dance in front and all about me
In unheard of droll gyrations,
Which arouse queer perturbations
In my breast;
Till entangled in their tether
I am dancing too together
With the rest.
But no mortal mind could tell,
And no tongue might syllable
Half the joy and miracle
Of the sight;
When, from silence growing dimmer
All these visions in the shimmer

Of the shades that glance and glimmer
 Leap to light.
Babies dear and dutiful,
Pink and gold and beautiful,
 With a cooing
 And a wooing
Of white arms and crimson lips—
 Crimson lips,
 And low laughter
 That hereafter
Even to my finger-tips—
 Finger-tips,
Thrills me through and through again,
Start from wall and window-pane,
Start from space and solid floor,
From the ceiling and the door,
From each empty couch and chair,
From the chambers of the air,
From the flicker of the flame
Still enchanting, still the same!
 From the lands
 Of poppied sleep,
 Blooming bands
 With white hands
 Awake and peep
 Arise and sweep
 Through all strands
 In rapture deep.
And those faces soft and simple
Full of love and pleasure dimple
 With their wiles
 Into smiles,
And draw fairy circles round
 Bluer than the sea-water,
Stronger than an iron bound
 But as fine as gossamer;
And they bind me very fast
 With a thousand threads of might

To the peoples of the past—
 Of the past,
 And the shores of old delight—
 Old delight,
Where in temples cool and vast—
 Cool and vast,
 Dreamings may be read aright—
 Read aright.
Then the great white owls august
With the secrets they entrust
 Unto none,
 One by one
 With a flop
 Downward drop—
 With a stare,
 None can bear—
 None can flee,
 Gaze at *me* ;
Each one gazing at me blinks
Grave and awful as the Sphinx,
Ghostwise from the Shadow's womb,
Like carved figures on a tomb
Dreadfully demure and calm,
But with quiet that is balm.
Then they stir and step and nod
In a fashion old and odd,
 Each one winks,
 Each one thinks
Deeper than the deepest law,
 But the gains
 Of their pains
None yet truly heard or saw.
 Then with flapping
 And a flopping—
 Flopping,
 Flopping,
 As if clapping
 Wings were dropping—

Dropping,
Dropping,
Lower lower down through all
And for evermore must fall,
They beyond my utmost hopes—
 Farthest fear,
 Saddest tear,
Through the sinking floor that opes
Moonlit depths and misty slopes
Wherewith fancy vainly copes,
 Disappear—
 Disappear.
And the apes more odd and old,
 Looking wiser
 Than a miser
Who has heaps of countless gold,
 Safely hidden
 In forbidden
Nooks beneath the churchyard mould,
 With grey faces
 And grimaces
 Mop and mow,
 Bob and bow
 Backward, forward,
 Southward, nor'ward,
Eastward, westward, and with looks
 More profound and learnèd far
Than the most profound of books
 Weave with wedded hands a bar
 None could ever
 Hope to sever,
Close me fast and shut me in
While they gaily sport and spin,
 Round and round,
 Wound, unwound,
Heads and legs and arms like flails
 Linked in most confusing lots,
And their very toes and tails

In inextricable knots ;
While they babble,
Grin and gabble,
Duck and dabble
In the flowers,
Such a rabble
And with such unearthly powers ;
Yes, they spin
Out and in,
Cheep and chatter,
Peep and patter,
Now still fatter
Now more thin,
Fawn and flatter
Till they win,
And begin
Then to shatter
Cup and platter
Without clatter,
And my skin
Tweak and tatter,
Pinch and batter
Without din,
And the flowers in handfuls scatter
All about me to and fro,
As if flowers were but a matter
Made to pelt and play with so ;
And when I am fairly bothered,
Blind and smothered,
With their jowls
Set like owls,
And like them demurely still
And unfathered and unmothered,
With the same sad sapient will,
Having worked me every ill
They (with nothing more to do)
Shake their heads and vanish too.
And I wander,

And I ponder,
In the haze
Of a maze
That looks yonder
All ablaze.
Then, as under azure skies—
Azure skies,
Come the wanton Butterflies—
Butterflies,
Come in clouds of every hue,
Scarlet, crimson, pink and blue,
Brown and mellow,
Bright and yellow
In the splendour of their plumes
Which the light of suns assumes,
And their fellow
Flowers in myriads illumines.
Till I really cannot guess,
In the woven loveliness
Of the blending
And unending
Choirs and colours shot in showers
By unseen and frolic Powers
Through and through the magic bowers,
Still ascending,
Still descending,
Which are Butterflies or flowers.
Now as stars
In white cars
Set on high in purple space,
O they twinkle
And they sprinkle
Blessèd beams upon my face.
Now they go,
Flakes of snow,
Wild and whirling on the blast,
Till I seem,
In a dream,

On the snowstorm caught and cast.
 Then the Birds,
 Pretty Birds,
 Sweetly painted,
 As if sainted
Things from pictures old and dim—
 Old and dim,
 Holy doves,
 Angel loves,
Touched with haloes swoon and swim—
 Swoon and swim ;
 Pretty Birds,
 Wingèd words,
 Talk and twitter,
 Music fitter
Than the music of the spheres—
 Of the spheres,
 As they flutter
 Through my bitter
Memories and track of tears—
 Track of tears.
Ah, I cease to wake and wonder,
When I read the writing under
Dainty throats and breasts of Birds,
 Pretty Birds,
 Wingèd words.
Why, when Heaven was rent asunder,
God embodied all His Love
 In a Dove,
 Holy Dove,
 Happy Dove.
But at last away they fly
To their opening native sky,
 While they carol
 In apparel
As of moons, and say good-bye.
 But the Bees,
 But the Bees,

Gold and silver striped with black,
Cream and crimson do not lack,
 And from trees
 Down the breeze
Seem to hurtle bullet-swift
On each ray, through every rift,
 In a hurry
 And a flurry,
 As if worry
 Made them scurry,
 With a fuzzing
 And a buzzing,
Straight to bleeding hearts of flowers
As to bridal beds and bowers ;
Thirsty Bees not educated,
And with sweets intoxicated,
Tumbling down and toppling over
From the honey-dew of clover—
 Broad red splashes,
 Great white dashes,
 Perfumed pillows,
 Rolling billows
Sweeping on a boundless lea
Like the glory of the sea,
Where the honey ever drips
Food for thousand thousand lips.
 O the Bees,
 O the Bees,
 Hear their coming
Far as mortal vision sees,
 With a humming
 And a strumming
Where the roses bloom at ease !
 But no money
 Buys the honey
Of the nectar that they find
Unto which our eyes are blind,
 And no measure

Metes the treasure
Which they take and safely bind
Hidden from all dull mankind ;
But they know
In the corners quaint and funny
How to seek it, where the sunny
Fountains flow.
Have they stings
As well as wings ?
Are they only thoughts, or things
All quite real,
Not ideal
Nonsense which a poet sings ?
Ask the blossom,
In whose bosom
Softly folded,
As if moulded
By sheer duty
To its beauty
And no other,
Like a brother
Lies the toiler
And the spoiler,
If it stings
While it clings.
They are busy, they are free,
Far too much to notice *me*,
And they keep their secret well
Buried in the blossom's bell.
Then in one vast cloud of sound
Rising, where they sweetly found
Work and shone,
Rushing on,
Overhead or underground
They are gone.
And the Flowers,
And the Flowers
Never grown in human bowers,

Never washed by earthly showers,
 Lifting up
 Scarlet cup,
 Golden shell
Never filled with mortal dowers,
Out of which the angels sup ;
Ringing here a silver bell
 Soft and low,
 Sad and slow,
Music true and terrible,
 Music all ineffable,
 Which once heard
 In the night
 Is a word
 More than sight,
And abides a treasure yet
When our passing suns have set ;
Showing there a veiled fire,
 As from thunder
 A white wonder,
Half delight and half desire,
In its modest eloquence
 With the stamp
 Of a lamp
Of an awful innocence
 In some shrine,
 Dim Divine,
Hung as by Omnipotence
Evermore a prayer to shine.
 Here and there,
 Everywhere,
 Softly laughing
Flowers of grandeur and of grace,
 Sweetly quaffing
In their shy and shadowed place
Of nepenthé and its balm,
 Gladly weeping,
 Stilly steeping

In their ecstasy of tears
 All the triumphs of the years,
 Climbing, creeping,
 Brightly keeping
 Watch in avenues of calm,
 Where red obelisk and palm
 In long levels
 Rest from revels
 And upraise the silent psalm.
 Yes, the Flowers
 Toss their towers,
 Carven stem and moulded stalk
 And their beryl chapters,
 Where the starbeams love to walk
 To the strains of dulcimers.
 And strange powers
 Unlike ours
 And with other larger skill
 Make the living chlorophyll
 In laboratories fair,
 Of the sunshine and the air.
 O the Flowers,
 Where the light
 Never lowers
 In its might,
 And the glory
 Is a story
 Ever old and ever new,
 Writ in colour and in dew
 Lightly spread,
 Only read
 By the holy and the few!
 Suns and moons,
 Nights and noons,
 Stars and gems,
 Diadems,
 Madness, mirth,
 Heaven and earth,

Meet and mingle,
Dance and tingle
In the rapture of their glow,
Summer sheen and winter snow,
Till they fold their wings and pass
 With a quiver
 And a shiver,
Like a breath upon a glass.
 But the dear
 Sweet forms a painter
Should make clear
 Now grow yet fainter,
And their bright
 Soft golden tresses,
Woven of light
 And all caresses,
Melt into the dusk and marry
 With the fireshine and the shade,
As if they were meant to tarry
 There, and one pale picture made
 While the growing
 And the flowing
Darkness clothes me like a dress,
With a thoughtful tenderness
Covering each curve and line
In its mystery divine,
Fitting into every fold
And assuming just the mould
Of my frame—each subtle whim
Fashioned by each separate limb,
Taking just the trick and turn
That no mortal art could learn,
And imprints on every crease
All its poetry and peace;
And with quite a mother's hand,
Half embracing, half command—
 Half command,
Wraps me round from outside in

And most gently tucks me in—
 Tucks me in.
While those flower-like faces soft
 Waxing dimmer,
Which do visit me so oft,
 'Twixt the glimmer
And the gloom upraised aloft,
 Like a swimmer
Pass into the ocean shade
And grow fairer as they fade—
 As they fade,
With the last red lingering spark
Floating upward in the dark—
 In the dark,
Waving still white arms to *me*
Wonderfully, as they flee—
 As they flee,
 Children's arms
 And golden charms
Of bright hair that seems to fly
Flashing through Infinity
 Dim and deep;
 And I sleep—
 And I sleep,
Sinking, sinking, hushed with kisses
And unthought of precious blisses,
Through the endless blue abysses,
 Down and down,
 Down and down
In the waves that do not drown
And the clouds that cannot frown,
 Faster, faster
 Through the vaster
Space that is my tyrant master,
Overwhelming and confounding
With its marvellous surrounding
And its courts that have no bounding—
 Ever faster,

Without heed of a disaster,
 Falling, falling
 Through the calling
Winds and waters on my way,
 At their play
 And enthralling,
Through the blue and bluer walling
Of a void that is appalling,
 But yet joy
 That does not cloy ;
As no mortal ever sank,
To the final dreamless Blank.
 Till from deep
 Unfathomed sleep,
In a moment then I break
 With a quake
 And a shake,
To my children round me smiling,
With their pretty ways beguiling,
 And I wake.

SECTION VI.

SORTES POETICÆ.

THE LAND OF NOD.

The stream of quiet life goes smoothly on,
In sunshine and in shade
Without a check, as it has ever gone,
While blossoms form and fade ;
And scarce a ripple breaks the even tide
Of labour touched with tears,
And modest hopes whose sober colours hide
The face of human fears
Deep down below, like an uncovered corpse
That yet no burial earns
Or decent rest, and with the current warps
And turns.

And scarce a murmur rises from the crowd,
They play unhonoured parts,
One wears a wedding robe and one a shroud,
And all have simple hearts ;
They take the daily burdens as they come,
With the old patient air,
And many brows are seamed with toil, and some
Are delicate and fair :
And no one dreams of shrinking from the task
That stocks their tiny store,
Or in the stress of noonday heat would ask
For more.

Not much above the horses that they drive
To plough the surly sod,
The men with wind and rain as meekly strive
And at their duties plod ;
And never think of other higher place,
But hardened in the snow
While shaped by storm, they get a rugged grace
And like their cattle grow ;
Yes, faithful as their dogs they draw its hue
And stiffness from the clay,
Or lift dim eyes to the o'erarching blue
And pray.

Each season brings the same unvaried lot,
Its pittance for the poor,
Another baby crying in the cot
Or tumbling on the floor ;
The sickness that no mortal arm can stay,
The share in earthly ill,
And, what they trust kind Providence will pay,
A dreadful doctor's bill ;
A breathing-space at Club time, a print dress
From the small Christmas dole,
And services slept through that make them guess
A soul.

They ask no questions, and accept the fate
Divided with their beasts,
That knocks in terror at the ivied gate
Or calls to casual feasts ;
And rising early late they find their rest
Of dreamless heavy sleep,
After a day that hardly yields a jest,
Through which they darkly creep ;
They eat and drink, and drudge the weary round
Of a dull hopeless fight,
Shut in by shadows of the churchyard bound
And night.

A birth, a death, a marriage is their change,
And little more they know,
Whose loftiest aims do yet not upward range,
On fleshpots set below ;
While children, like fledged birds that spread their wings
At length and farther fly,
Forsake the nest, to which affection clings,
By turns in flitting shy ;
Or friends like sudden ghosts start strangely up
From countries over sea,
To spin long yarns and drink the social cup
Of tea.

A drowsy place it is, where silence reigns
And foliage falls to rot
Just where it rests, and no one brightly feigns
The pleasures he has not ;
And no one recks of any prouder part
Or richer realm and food,
Each nurses still the same unruffled heart
With the same quiet mood ;
They come and go as their forefathers did,
Who toiling left no name,
And on them drops some time the coffin lid
The same.

Yet no unhappy lot which little dares,
Secluded from the beat
Of angry waves, and raises above cares
Its solitary seat ;
And though without the joy of gallant strife
Across the ages fought,
Without the sorrow of the larger life
That is so dearly bought ;
And what is saved is certain for the hand,
If soul or seeding pod,
For yet the spoiler's grip has spared the Land
Of Nod.

Faint murmurs from the mighty world afar
Steal through the sheltered pale,
When some grand crisis leaves the door ajar
For deeper draughts than ale ;
Or an adventurous lad has broken loose,
From the tame trodden ruts
And common dotted o'er with goat and goose,
To higher joys than nuts ;
And then wild visions, not by fancy craved,
Paint on their prison hold
The treasures of the town, and markets paved
With gold.

Perchance disasters come, that roughly shake
The dullest from their trance,
And, lo, they rub their sleepy eyes and wake
To woe's great grim romance ;
A tragic death or murder with red arm,
Drops like a thunder bolt,
And at the spell of that long peaceful charm
Makes sudden fierce revolt ;
But thus once more the stagnant mind is moved
Down to its lowest deep,
And then they turn (a moment roused and proved)
And sleep.

Spring speaks to them, not of its laughing flowers,
But burdens carried late,
And all the harder work with longer hours
That from the primrose date ;
Beneath the beauty gaily round them set,
And bursting from the soil
The yellow cup and virgin violet,
They only see the toil ;
And if they ever sing upon the track
Of service surely wrought,
They sing not out of greater bliss but lack
Of thought.

The summer is no glory, nor a slip
 Of sweetness quickly gone,
 Betwixt new life and death, but just a whip
 That hastens harvest on ;
 A fiery scourge that beats upon the head,
 Or bids the shoulders bow,
 To wring from daily work the daily bread
 And scorch the furrowed brow ;
 But not a feast that sound and perfume blends
 With colour's magic link,
 To those whose thirst too oft begins and ends
 In drink.

And so the labourers sleep and drudge and sup,
 Like pigs about the fields
 They take their portion and yet look not up
 To Him who blessing yields ;
 Like vegetables fattening on the ground
 They deeper strike their roots,
 And stare with stupid eyes at God's own round
 Of frost and summer fruits ;
 They in the moment live, and do not live
 Who miss the fairer Dawn,
 To seize the scraps their petty fortunes give
 And yawn.

They gaze not forward, and they look not back
 To gather wisdom's ears,
 And though the thunder roar and earthquake crack
 Their world the same appears ;
 Without one noble fear, without regret,
 Unconscious they are slaves,
 They ankle-deep in mud by eve forget
 The morning's cruel graves ;
 They blindly mount the hill where others rose,
 And fail as others fall,
 And blankly wait the Union at the close
 Of all.

The parson is the keeper of their souls,
 Between them and hot hell,
 And does religion for them, as he rolls
 Forth sermons known so well ;
 He prays for them and reads the blessèd Book,
 And lavish is with pence,
 And teaches them to trust his Christian cook
 Even more than Providence ;
 The lordly squire, who feeds on fatted calf
 And drinks the costliest wine,
 A distant wonder is and figure half
 Divine.

But still the brute machine its ponderous part
 Goes grinding slowly on,
 Without a lofty hope or living heart,
 As it has ever gone ;
 The toilers are but pivots in the wheel
 That works its duties out,
 And in the thick of fighting do not feel
 The shaking battle shout ;
 They at the utmost heave the prison band
 Beneath the crusting clod,
 And dream but of free dinners in the land
 Of Nod.

THE CONQUERORS OF HEAVEN.

Thou turnest darkness into light,
 Great God, our own and only part,
 O glorious eavesdropper, that art
 In all Thy majesty of might,
 Behind the door of every heart,
 And dwellest in the night.

God of our fathers, unto Thee
 We lift our agonising hands
 That may not break their iron bands,

And strain these eyes that cannot see
Thy Presence, once the sun of lands
Where dwelt Thy Israel free.

Yea, something of celestial grace
Those holy seers on holy ground
From Thee in Thy great mercy found,
Who communed with Thee face to face,
And with the lightning robed around
Made Thee their dwelling-place.

And who shall all the wonders count,
Wrung from redeeming flame and tears,
Their portion in those solemn years,
Who talked with earthquakes on the mount,
And the new life of noble fears
Drank from the fiery fount ?

Ah, whither is the splendour gone,
That brightened earth and sea, and made
Thy very Hand its battle blade,
And deathless through all history shone—
That shed on Heaven itself a shade,
And guided ages on ?

Now we are scattered far, and born
To woe and bitter want and shame ;
Who have no treasure but Thy Name,
And see no mercy in the morn,
That damns to fiercer gyves of flame,
And heavier cross of scorn.

We cannot call our own the wife,
The baby at the bosom nursed,
Whose pretty lips are fondly pursed
To look for love and meet the knife ;
For we, O Lord, are only cursed
And blasted into life.

We suffer all that mortals can,
Who may not learn, who cannot toil,
Who are not sure of any soil
Except the grave's poor narrow span ;
And even the lamp of holy oil
Is dying under ban.

Our daughters are not safe from harms,
The jest of sots, a tavern song,
And yet we cannot help the wrong
Wrought on them for their fatal charms ;
But Thou, Jehovah, still art strong,
And judgment clothes Thine arms.

O in this cruel Christian land,
The brutes are better kept than we,
Who suffer sore and dare not be
Ourselves, and scarce may raise a hand
Or bent in worship bow the knee,
Without the galling brand.

Our foes are many, we are few,
We totter feebly, dumb and blind,
In quest of love we cannot find,
And rest with its refreshing dew ;
But who was ever just or kind,
To the lone hunted Jew ?

For we are lower than the least,
And dare not claim that common right,
Which is the refuge and the light
Of wretches with no other feast ;
And savage laws against us fight,
Which yet protect the beast.

And all these horrors in Thy Name,
O God of Righteousness and Love,
Who sentest man the Holy Dove,

Are wrought on woman's tender frame,
Who draws her blessing from above
And with Thy beauty came.

We knock and knock at Mercy's gate,
Before Thy feet we fainting lie,
Who must not rend the monstrous tie
Which knots us to our homeless fate;
And yet we know we cannot die,
Though lost and desolate.

The prey of murder, hate and theft,
Where'er the Russian eagle raves
And leaves its ghastly peace of graves,
Of every hope but Thee bereft;
We are of all the crouching slaves,
And Heaven alone is left.

And yet we will not tamely yield
To legal pelf or crownèd lust,
That inextinguishable trust
Which is our glory and our shield,
And makes (though empires turn to dust)
The world its harvest-field.

We have heroic minds, and trod
The centuries with heroic pace,
And left on all a grander grace
Than any by the Roman rod;
Because we were the chosen race,
The favourites of God.

And never were we meant to drudge
Or yield to yoke of baser brain,
And suffer penury and pain,
To sate a coward despot's grudge;
We should enrich the earth with gain,
And be the nations' judge.

O we were made to carry light
With warmth and wisdom unto all,
And rend from Heaven the deadly pall
That darkened even the poet's sight ;
To rule the ages, and to call
The kingdoms to their right.

Rejected by the lands, that draw
The riches none but we have sown,
Where'er the Blessed Book is known,
Which gave them holy life and law,
Outcasts to Thee we are Thine own,
And monarchs only straw.

Each day they plunder us of store
So hardly won and then not blest,
And tear our darlings from the breast,
Or drive us from yet dearer lore ;
While vainly unto Thee for rest,
We cry for evermore.

And year by year yet farther spread,
The iron empire now too vast,
And built upon a bloody past,
Is in the light of ruin read,
Which captive Israel shall outlast—
An empire of the dead.

God of our fathers, Thou dost see
How they have only conquered earth,
And made it but a darker dearth ;
But we have conquered Heaven and Thee,
To give all climes a second birth,
With Thy own greatness free.

Reveal Thy vengeance now, and break
The pride and prowess of their sword ;
Cast from our necks the hangman's cord,
The glorious seat of judgment take ;
And evil on its throne, O Lord,
Now let thy thunder shake.

THE TWO WAYS.

Vain and valiant in his walk,
 Most devoted with his talk,
 Ever is the way of man
 With the maiden of his choice,
 Who will listen to the voice
 Sugared nicely to her taste,
 Trembling in its tender haste—
 Ever is the way of man,
 Passion moulded on a plan,
 Just to snare her simple love,
 Worn a season like his glove—
 Ever is the way of man.

Shy and shamefaced in her look,
 Like a bright half-opened book,
 Ever is the way of maid
 With the man her fancy takes,
 When it coyly first awakes
 To the glory of new skies
 And new earth in human eyes—
 Ever is the way of maid,
 Rushing forth and yet afraid
 Of the treasure more than dress,
 Strange and awful happiness—
 Ever is the way of maid.

Eager, ardent, quick to strife
 For her sake, and pledging life,
 Ever is the way of man
 With the maiden he would woo,
 Load with gifts and worship too,
 Queen and goddess, slave and toy,
 For a passing jest or joy—
 Ever is the way of man,
 Who will promise what he can,
 Just to wreak an idle whim,
 Bubble on his glass's brim—
 Ever is the way of man.

True and steadfast, giving all,
Wild devotion at his call,

Ever is the way of maid
With the man her glowing heart
Yields the riches it must part,
Reverence that goes not by,
Honour for eternity—

Ever is the way of maid,
Who refuses to be paid,
And will lavish hope and health,
That her idol may have wealth—
Ever is the way of maid.

Fair and fervent, wise and brave,
Ready to dare wind or wave,
Ever is the way of man
With the maiden he would choose,
Proud to lace her pretty shoes,
Fetch the missing shawl or hat,
Be her mantle or her mat—

Ever is the way of man,
Prompt to carry world or fan
On his shoulders, just to please,
Or his darling set at ease—
Ever is the way of man.

Greatly clinging, sweet and sure,
Though so downcast and demure,
Ever is the way of maid
With the man of her desire,
Whom she clothes in king's attire,
Raises to a dazzling throne
Meant for him and him alone—

Ever is the way of maid,
Who her tresses' silken braid
Would bestow lest he should drown,
And her fame creates his crown—
Ever is the way of maid.

In his purpose fixed and strong,
 With professions loud and long,
 Ever is the way of man
 With the maiden he would win,
 As the claret for his bin,
 For a bumper at the first,
 Then the sip of sated thirst—
 Ever is the way of man,
 Since the world of love began ;
 Since the Devil, tempting Eve,
 Him apprenticed to deceive—
 Ever is the way of man.

Proof against the golden lure,
 Meek and mighty to endure,
 Ever is the way of maid
 With the man of her delight,
 Whom she seeks to serve aright
 In the raging fire and flood,
 Sealing ministry with blood—
 Ever is the way of maid,
 But to lend her hero aid,
 With her first and latest breath
 Fond and faithful unto death—
 Ever is the way of maid.

JERICHO REBUILT.

For centuries it lay, dethroned, discrowned,
 A memory, a sign, a thing of shame,
 A shadow thwart, that on the pilgrim's path
 Its horror threw and lifted threatening hands
 As though to strike, and chilled the summer's heat ;
 For centuries it lay, and stone on stone
 Was not, and solemn word on solemn word
 Was not—though once the lofty hymn and hope
There rose up, step by step, and climbed to Heaven,
 Like fire—and only blasted wrack remained,

With shapeless shapes ; and the avenger Time
Had driven its ploughshare deep in buttressed wall,
And written mockery on the marble niche,
And dashed the window's wonder to the ground,
Scrabbling on mouldy mullions letters dark,
Judgment and wrath and woe and bitter tears,
In flame of lichen and the weeping moss.
The wrinkled ruins, with the yoke of years
And burden of God's doom, lay in the dust
Grovvelling and grim, and hid their withered face,
Unknown, unhonoured, and unburied still,
In hateful haunted silence ; and the days
Went on, and brought no beauty of relief
Nor voice of one to comfort ; and the night
Refused to hide or heal the gaping wounds
And ugly seams. The drunkard sat and scrawled
His ribald jest on broken pillar's pride,
And cornice erst so reverend and fair ;
Yea, loathsome reptiles in the fallen fane
Sported and sprawled, and reared their hideous brood.

The curse was on it, and no mortal dared
Once more to build the Temple from its base,
The calm white column and the echoing aisle
That vanished into dim and distant space,
With the great pagan altar beautiful
Where daily the dread sacrifice was set,
And doors that opened out eternity.
The traveller hurried by, the children stared
And stayed a moment petrified with fear,
Then turned aghast and fled on wings of wind,
As at a vision of the dead and damned.
For there the giant stretched his massive limbs,
The writhing terror of the shattered trunk,
The legs of iron and the feet of clay
Which once Colossus-like bestrode the world,
And awful arms that raised on high to slay
Were stiffened as they stabbed with killing frost,

Now cold and stark but terrible in death.
A sad and sombre cloud above it hung,
Intolerable, deep, and heavier fell
And heavier still, and hourly gathered gloom
That crept with chilling blight upon the breast,
And sapped the fiery fountainhead of life,
And hushed the laugh which curled the rosy lip,
And quenched the sunrise of the radiant eye,
And over all sweet promise cast a spell
Malignant, dire and dark, and infinite ;
So sullen was the atmosphere, that hugged
The desolation in its stern embrace,
Like the long winter of the Arctic ice,
And that gaunt land where day itself is night.

But, while men slept, the Adversary came,
Whose name is Evil, with the woman's brow
And heart of lust, and dug foundations deep
In darkness, and yet built and built again
Silently, surely, as the hours unrolled
The secret of their solemn manuscript.
Regardless of the curse, he laboured on
To shape a dungeon for the souls of men
Of a great temple wonderful and fair,
But always in the mask of something else
And something good or beautiful and grand,
To cheat the charmèd ears and trick the eyes
Of willing dupes in admirable ways ;
And always in the shadow of the night
He toiled, and traced the circuit of the walls
And planned the rapture of the rising towers,
The window lights that burned like holy fire
For ever in their storied frames of stone
And as from altars leaped to kindred Heaven,
Yet chained by sorceries of unrighteous prayer ;
He toiled, and slept not in his vigil vast,
That compassed in its kingdom every clime,

He added stone to stone, and pile to pile,
And thought to thought that in white marble stamped
Budded and blossomed and broke forth in fruit
And rippled over in sweet surf of song,
In laughter low and inextinguishable ;
While tier on tier the stately courses ran,
Rejoicing in their majesty and might,
Higher and higher to the perfect plan
And meet proportion of their measured height,
Shot here and there with shining columned shafts
In constellations rich or sole and rare,
While spread the spandrel and its crowning grace
Dropt like a dream from architrave sublime.

But still men slept, and, lo, the wicked work
In its exceeding splendour manifold
Waxed under the thick curtain of the night
In pomp of purpose and sweet circumstance,
With many glittering baits and golden lures,
The wealth of waving palms and purple robes,
The arts with all their gay adulteries,
And witcheries of wedded sight and sound,
Tempest of music, and the master step
That walked in glory on the waves it stirred
To rise and fall and wrestle, and then die
In agonies of endless cadences.
And in the darkness worshippers came fast,
The pulse of many feet in porches long,
That echoed in innumerable tones,—
Like surge of seas on soft white coral strands
Beating for ever and for ever on
Out into spaces of infinity,—
Thronging the painted shrines and porticoes,
That glowed within the City of the Moon
And made the Temple marvellous and bright
With an unhallowed beauty terrible,
That stole its starry graces not from Heaven.

And thus, at last, the children of the light
 Awoke and saw the sudden towers rebuilt,
 Seeming to float as clouds in summer skies ;
 While walls, that flashed their fair artillery,
 The ravishments of false religion's wiles,
 Put forth enchanting arms and drew to them
 And the sweet fever of illicit love,
 Strange fires of altars' palpitating breast,
 The foolish myriads dazzled to their doom.

But over it still hung the curse of God,
 Grim as a sword and hungry as the grave.

THE CURSE OF GREATNESS.

He stood among the herd, a king of men,
 And towered above them in imperial thought
 That communed with the kindred Heaven, and wrought
 New realms of riches with his magic pen ;
 He trod unharmed the lions' bloody den,
 And with the powers of death and darkness fought,
 Or the fierce lightning to sweet service brought,
 Who passed beyond the climes of human ken.
 But yet, alas ! he had no fellow mind
 To mate with his, that read the storied stone
 And cast around the stars its conquering zone ;
 While to his chariot yoking wave and wind,
 The love of mortals yet he could not bind,
 Wrapt in his dreadful majesty, alone.

He looked beyond the bars, that lesser scope
 Shut in to shadow of ignoble fears,
 Ever in pain and penury to grope,
 And bade bright portals out of chaos ope ;
 He wrung their secret from the silent years,
 And the fair message of forgotten tears,
 In the great kindling of a larger hope,

On altar of the ages' long arrears.
But still between his life and others' lay
A gulf unbridged, as of the night and day,
That severed him from follies base and rude ;
He boldly clasped the form of Nature nude,
And beauty that would weaker spirit slay,
In uncompanioned awful solitude.

No friend had he to cheer his upward track,
Born in the purple of a royal life,
Which nought in common had with vulgar strife
And petty hearts, that trembled and turned back ;
No equal mate was his, no loving wife
Might share his greatness in her modest lack,
When lone he faced the tempest's roar and wrack,
Nor stand betwixt him and the assassin's knife.
He had no fellow, and he needed none,
Who looked straight forward to the end of time,
And made his own the cross of every clime ;
While rested fools on barren fighting done,
He held it little till all worlds were won,
Apart from others, with his soul sublime.

As soars a mighty peak above the main,
That rolls around and yet is not its kin,
He stretched above the mob that strove in vain
To burst the prison, and then hugged their chain ;
He took no pleasure in the sweets of sin,
He found amusement only mean and thin,
And lust of lucre but a haunting pain
That when it vanished left the venom in.
Thus men and women by him idly danced
Down into darkness, and the dreadful gate
Received them with its silence to their fate ;
And still upon his iron armour glanced
The fiery shafts of time, as he advanced
To meet the future, sole and separate.

A KING OF MEN.

The dower of greatness was his own at birth,
And like a glory girt the haloed head
Even in the cradle ; and his mother heard
The angels talking with him in the night
Of hopes august and awful mysteries,
With a fair future that would ope its gates
And golden dawn to him and him alone,
While he replied with blessed baby song
And laugh. And much she marvelled at his ways,
The upturned look and clear intelligence
Of those grey eyes, most beautiful and calm,
That lived on earth and walked the heaven itself,
As if they saw the vision past the veil.
And so he grew, a solitary child,
Who read the mighty book of Nature's lore,
The pages of the sky, the tales of trees
On which were written reverend histories
And unknown arts through immemorial time ;
The wisdom of the waters, as they carved
And shaped the plastic earth to work their will,
For æons and for æons evermore,
While stars arose and set, and other stars
Were born and died ; the lessons learned of fire,
Which laid its strong hand architectural
On teeming matter multiform, and all
Moulded in magic veins for future use,
In sealèd volumes. Thus he gathered grace
And strength, and rapture of sublime repose
Given but to souls that sit at Nature's feet,
And quarry thence their human love divine.
But, as he nearer drew to her, and God
Who breathes through her and grandly prophesies
To eyes that see and hearts that understand,
He farther moved from men that buzzed around
Like summer flies, and strove, and stung, and died,
And deemed his giant fancies foolishness,

Though more than vulgar facts ; while they themselves,
In sensual slumber nodding lived and dreamed,
And never woke. No friendships could he frame
With minds attuned to earth and earthly chants,
And miry of the mire that clove to them,
That dragged them down, and yet still lower dragged
To the base level of one little world
Of brutal lusts, and soiled their very souls.
None might endure the awful atmosphere
Of kingly thought, that did encompass him,
Through which he drank and drank the glorious cup,
Nepenthe called, that is eternity,
Life to the few and to the many death.
And sadness sometimes on his forehead lay,
It dimmed his eye, and shook the conquering arm
That met the Maker's in a common toil
To one high end, and joined with his. A gulf
Wherein the winds of separation howled,
A gulf unbottomed and impassable,
Yawned between him and even the purest aims,
And cast its shadow on him, as he slept,
Robed in the curse of his great loneliness,
Out upon empty Space that bore him up
Like solid granite, over blasted plans,
Through flame and tears and bitter night of scorn,
By desperate circuits, to the blessed goal,
Which is no other than the kiss of God.

WITHIN A CHURCH.

The morning breaks, the shadows rise and flee,
Like guilty ghosts, that start
Forth from the haunted dusk of tower or tree,
And tremble and depart ;
Its rays write poems on the marble floors,
And roses fling in strife,
Till day throws open wide a thousand doors
Of splendid spacious life ;

A glorious burst of music, and the tread
Of winds in gathering hosts
That arm for battle's joy, although the dead
Sleep at their solemn posts.

Awakes the busy world to laugh and weep
In the old human way,
While mourners to their curtained haven creep,
And pilgrims curse or pray ;
The mother greets her baby with a kiss,
The tyrant lifts his rod,
And sufferers kneel in vain to the abyss
Of Silence men call God ;
But each has work to do, if only sport,
And iron harness don
Or festive raiment, for the time is short ;
And yet the dead sleep on.

But once those voices mixed in mirth, as ours,
Or joined in friendly fray,
And from the singing summer caught the flowers
That smiled but would not stay ;
And once those hands, long crumbled into dust,
Were eager for their toil
And gript the spade, or fed in tender trust
The lamp of holy oil ;
And once those feet were fired with purpose high,
To dare the untravelled deep,
Or climb to Heaven and draw its radiance nigh,
Though with the dead they sleep.

Their hearts were just as full of guardian hopes,
And mingled with sweet tears,
As thine, that unto suns unearthly opes
Its fount of blessed fears ;
They loved, as thou, who lettest generous life
Go out in utter faith,
To reel in horror from the murderous knife,
Or meet a mocking wraith ;

And their affection all its rapture spread
On each enchanted hill
Of old romance and rest, though now the dead
In darkness sleep so still.

Beneath this quiet slab a soldier lies,
Who victories might have won
In worlds where yet no flag of England flies,
A greater Wellington ;
Whose sword had flashed, the glory of the State,
Not drawn for petty hire,
Betwixt our altars and o'erwhelming fate,
A wall of living fire ;
Even if the tempest of each deadly stroke
On his one bosom fell,
That but for country beat until it broke ;
Though now the dead sleep well.

Here rests a statesman, whose prophetic soul
Had seen the coming gloom
Afar, and with the shield of his control
Staved off its dreadful doom ;
Who long had stood a refuge for all needs,
With ready hero hand,
And built his greatness into patriot deeds,
A bulwark of the land ;
Born to command, and gifted with the grace
And light that never shone
For royal despot hedged with lies and lace ;
Though now the dead sleep on.

Here rests a dreamer, one inspired to heed
(Below the thunder's cloud)
The wedding-garment of a golden creed,
Which yet became his shroud ;
Whose visions truer were than vulgar facts,
The food of vulgar minds,
And breathed the promise of immortal acts,
Above all waves and winds ;

Who might have been a maker of his time,
And steered its venturous prow
Across new oceans to a nobler clime ;
Though here the dead sleep now.

Here rests a maiden, beautiful and sweet,
And girt with gracious ways
And fairer flowers, that blossomed at the feet
Of larger other days ;
Who gave to all her all, and only found
Earth paid with burial stone,
And cramped her mighty world in that cold bound,
And lived and loved alone ;
Who might have been a grateful kingdom's joy,
For monarchs great and gone,
And not one sordid household's tool and toy ;
Though now the dead sleep on.

Here rests a saint, whose spirit was a flame
Kindled at suffering's cross,
Brave to endure the shadow and the shame
Of all his brothers' loss ;
That, while it throbbed with more than human hope,
To succour hearts and save,
Had burst the prison of its envelope,
And lit a people's grave ;
That might have led, where none before him trod,
By solemn path and sere,
A weeping realm back to itself and God ;
Though now the dead sleep here.

And there outside and everywhere the sound
Of happy things at play,
That washes these old walls, and ripples round
The buttress gaunt and gray ;
Green leaves are dancing in the wind, young blooms
Half open but to blush,

And scribbled on the sky in gleams and glooms
The swallow makes its rush ;
Light through red panes that dim its laughing mood,
While leaps the matin's bell,
Falls like great drops of blood upon the rood ;
And yet the dead sleep well.

THE TWO WORLDS.

I.

Beautiful with all that earth can render
Of its most bewitching and its best,
All the poetry divine and tender
Breathing from a wondrous woman's breast ;
Fair, it rises with its store of riches
Far and wide in pomp of stately streets,
Forms like saints that have stepped down from niches
Where the heart with Heaven adoring meets ;
Spreading to the light its laughing glory,
Crimson lips, dark eyes, and haloed hair,
Claspt white hands, and love's impassioned story,
Beautiful and fair.

II.

Terrible with wried and wrinkled faces,
Scowling hatefully as from the tomb,
Things that stagger down with stealthy paces
From the darkness to the welcome doom ;
Grim it burrows deep, with curse and crying,
In gaunt dens that never know the day,
Peopled only with the dead and dying,
Where gray children dare not smile or play ;
Where the female is no longer woman,
Hideously unsexed by hourly need,
Haunt of blear-eyed demons, nothing human,
Terrible indeed.

I.

World of bliss, where bosoms do not tremble
Save with joy at the requited glance,
Where the revellers part but to assemble
Yet again for feasting and the dance ;
Low bright brows, the secret intimation
Flashed by grace with sweetness of the South,
Movement set to song, the revelation
In the rapture of a rosy mouth ;
Waves of rippling talk in shy recesses,
Sighs betwixt the throb of golden strings,
Looks that fall like kisses, and caresses
Soft as angel wings.

II.

World of woe and one unending sadness,
Black and blasted from the very first,
Breaking into sudden moans of madness
From pale lips for ever cracked with thirst ;
Babies blighted ere they reach the portal
Of the birth that is a poison breath,
Where the evil only is immortal
And the life a stark and staring death ;
Where they herd in horror and suspicion,
Till the coffin lid is on them jammed,
Like a ghastly picture of perdition,
Dreadful as the damned.

Yet they touch, though fear and famine sever
Guilty shame from those enchanting charms,
But while neighbours always they may never
Mix or mingle white and sullied arms ;
Thrust apart, if each the other misses,
Through the shadow of the yearning years,
By those awful and unbridged abysses
Of the ruin beyond reach of tears ;

Here is sorrow with the sin its leaven,
 There is music of the marriage bell—
 Side by side with lower streets of Heaven,
 Upper streets of Hell.

NOTA BENE.

Dear old boy, now *you* are going
 Out into the strife,
 For the victors life,
 For the many vanquished growing
 (If on pain its garlands throwing)
 Grim as slaughter knife;
 Take, as little birds their groun'sel,
 From your father this brief counsel;
 Aubrey mine, you shall;
 Valeat quantum val.;
 For I know I am but mortal
 And of little worth
 Drawing to the last dim portal,
 To return to earth;
 Yet in my long fitful journey,
 From the travel and the tourney,
 I have gathered bane and bliss—
 I have learnt that even Irené
 May be deadly with her kiss;
 Nota bene.

Old am I and you are younger
 With a poet's heart,
 Ignorant of art
 Cruel and its creeping hunger
 Greedy as an evil-monger
 Never to depart;
 Still untouched by tender passion
 Or the tyrannies of fashion,

Young enough to look
 At the hoary book
 Of my memories, and in it
 Read the yellow page
 For one brief and passing minute
 Of its wrinkled age ;
 When amid the fight or feasting
 Or the heedless happy eating
 Of the painted pleasure ship,
 Flashes forth the warning " Mene "
 On the wall or curling lip ;
Nota bene.

Hear me, boy, while you can listen
 In the opening day
 Bright on manhood's way—
 While the tears that grace you glisten
 In the loving eyes they christen
 Nobly for the fray ;
 Ah, expect from fortune little,
 Fate is strong, your staff is brittle
 If of bravest oak,
 And the awful yoke
 With its grinding weight of iron
 Still forbidding rest
 Soon perchance will you environ
 Eating in the breast ;
 Buckle on your stoutest armour,
 Turn not for the voice of charmer
 Wooing to the Sirens' land ;
 Think of Marathon, Mycené,
 And with soldiers take your stand ;
Nota bene.

Ah, my own and only darling
 Of the crownèd race,
 Though the tempest chase,
 Heedless of its sullen snarling,

Eager as an uncaged starling
 For the larger space ;
 Trust not overmuch the knowledge
 Taught not by the camp but college,
 Wisdom of the schools
 Lore for chambered fools,
 Meant not for the shock of battle
 In the bloody field,
 When the bolts of thunder rattle
 On the brazen shield ;
 Trust not greatly promise human,
 Laughing lips and eyes of woman
 With the sweetness of a saint,
 Pure and perfect as Selené,
 For the sweetness has a taint ;
 Nota bene.

Son and soldier, hold the banner
 Beautiful and free,
 Handed down to thee,
 In the fine and fearless manner
 Borne by many a hero planner
 Dying not to flee ;
 Love thou well, but loving only
 What is fair, if thou be lonely
 In the trysting late,
 Kept at glory's gate ;
 He that of his heart is miser
 Hoarding on the shelf,
 Is not reaping, nor is wiser
 Living for himself ;
 Look within thy breast ; affection
 Ever gives the best direction,
 And the pathway of the night
 Far as African Cyrené,
 Is the pathway of the light ;
 Nota bene.

Now, good-bye, your work is ready
 For the gallant arm
 Nerved with honour's charm,
 And the footstep firm and steady,
 If the thoughts at first be heady,
 Steeled against alarm ;
 In the bitter hour of trial,
 Bear the buffets of denial,
 Ridicule and loss,
 Standing by the Cross ;
 Take what sturdy struggling teaches
 Souls repulsed and rent
 In the jaws of fiery breaches,
 Holy discontent ;
 Still advance and be the master
 Of thyself and thence disaster,
 Wounds or women's honeyed wiles,
 Cheap and chattering as Gallinæ,
 With their paid and perjured smiles ;
 Nota bene.

POST EQUITEM SEDET ATRA CURA.

It was in the Autumn late and lone,
 And I stood by a blighted tree,
 And its shadow fell on a blasted stone
 Which was dolorous to see.
 The clouded sky was tost and torn
 And a north wind wailed afar,
 And betwixt the boughs of the agèd thorn
 Looked down one little star ;
 But the little star stept out and in
 As the clouds came rushing by,
 Like an angel's face on a world of sin
 From a sweet eternity.

And a weary horseman lean and lank
From the forest bracken burst,
With the midnight dew his face was dank
And he looked like a thing accurst;
He was pale and withered and he bent
In a saddle seamed with time,
And his head that nodded as he went
With his horse's pace kept chime;
He turned not either left or right,
And the leaves they rustled on,
But he rode straight forward through the night
And the star above him shone.

But never a sound of man or steed,
Though they brake from the bitter north,
While they seemed in the grip of a frightful need,
As they hurried wildly forth.
They were now in glimmer and now in gloom
In the curtain black or white,
Of the silvery birch or the swarthy broom
Or the bramble's armed spite;
But never a sound of steed or man
That a mortal ear might woo,
While they hurried on as beneath a ban
And the little star stepped too.

So I hailed them there with a greeting loud,
And the wind was all astir,
And the moon just tipt an angry cloud,
"What luck, O traveller?
Thou art late abroad and the way is dark
And thy roan is jaded sore,
And there is no friendly voice or mark
To guide thy journey more."
But he only stared before him yet
That rider thwart and thin,
And the grasses waved their banners wet,
And the little star stepped in.

Though he scarce might be of human mould,
For he grizzled looked and grim
And his face was ashen white and cold
In the creeping vapours dim ;
And the eyes seemed sternly fixed and strange
With a purpose not of earth,
That had swept the fields of mortal change
And gathered thence but dearth ;
Yet I saw the bony fingers gleam
And the saddle's seamy clout,
In the ghostly glance of a sudden beam,
As the little star stept out.

Then I hailed him once in the Blessèd Name,
As he fared on his awful tryst,
While I bade him pause for the very shame
And the love of the Blessèd Christ.
But I signed my breast with the Holy Rood
And again I signed my brow,
And I swore by the Altar's Living Food
With a thrice-repeated vow ;
Till the rider stooped to a stronger will,
With the star above him lone,
And the red roan bounded and then stood still
As stiffened into stone.

And he spoke in the forest gaunt and gray
While a child might count a score,
Though his voice seemed leagues and leagues away
From a dark and distant shore.
“ I have ridden since the eve came down,
I may never once turn back,
If the thunder peal or the midnight frown
And the lightning sear my track ;
Oh, I dare not tarry on the road
With the star above to guide,
For my heart is bowed with a bitter load
And I haste to meet my bride.

“ I have ridden thus for a hundred years
And shall ride a hundred yet,
On this one sad night of my solemn tears,
Ere this broken heart forget ;
And my light, my life, I must follow still
If I never see her more,
Through the bearded brake, by the rock or rill,—
She is flying on before.
We were joined in wedlock true and tight
As the hand within the glove,
But she fell from her horse on the wedding night,
And I go to meet my love.”

And then like melting shapes of snow,
While the leaves resumed their dance,
The man and the steed in a fiery glow
Burst forth from their frozen trance ;
And he galloped madly from my gaze
With his frame in sorrow bent,
And the drooping head in the autumn haze
That nodded as he went.
But never a sound that told the doom
Of that rider thwart and thin ;
As he spurred straight forward through the gloom
And the little star stept in.

CREDIT POPULUS

I.

I do believe, the goodly land,
Like sunshine and the air,
Was framed to fill the labourer's hand
And be his portion fair ;
The harvest rendered by the soil
Which idlers wrongly sheave,
Should be the blessing of his toil—
And this I do believe.

2.

I do believe, God never meant
The manhood He has wrought
To be a slavish instrument,
By petty tyrants bought ;
To wrestle in the iron mill
Where thousands grind and grieve,
For selfish masters' wanton will—
And this I do believe.

3.

I do believe, this form was made
To flourish in the light,
And not be huddled up in shade
Or barred from common right ;
To stand erect and strong and share
Those gifts the classes thieve,
Not crippled by the strife of care—
And this I do believe.

4.

I do believe, the Godlike mind,
That severs us from beasts,
Was not to be for ever blind
To science and its feasts ;
The beauties of the bounteous earth
That sweetly hearts deceive,
Should shine on our poor stunted dearth—
And this I do believe.

5.

I do believe, no thorn and weed
For us were simply sown,
But we may clasp a kinder creed
And call ourselves our own ;
No earnings need we lightly lose
Past reaching of reprieve,
Nor worship as we would not choose—
And this I do believe.

6.

I do believe, we have a claim
 On every gift of God,
 And may in freedom boldly aim
 Above the creeping clod ;
 And man is worth whate'er he is,
 Not what his riches weave,
 The earth and heaven and all are his—
And this I do believe.

BENE VIXIT QUI BENE LATUIT.

I.

No suns for me, O God, nor larger light,
 But blessèd Night
 And more of darkness and its sweeter day,
 The long delay
 Of the vast vision now too much for me
 With lowly love,
 Who care not to be overwise or free
 Of thrones above ;
 Mine is the earth and mine the common toil
 And kindred soil ;
 Give me not Thou the curse of killing light,
 But native Night.

2.

Dear is the friendly shadow, and I spurn
 At every turn
 The lamps of Science with their sickly glare
 And vulgar stare,
 That strips its decent dress from Nature's form,
 Reducing trust,
 The power of beauty and the pomp of storm
 To sordid dust ;
 I hate the knowledge, that is devil's power
 Blasting my bower ;
 Oh ! give me blossoms that retain their bloom
 And kindly gloom.

3.

Sweet is the twilight and the upward gaze
 In glorious haze,
 And the dim rapture behind radiant bars,
 Unrisen stars.
 And woe the ghastly Learning with rude touch
 Of hands profane,
 That rob the pilgrim of his pious crutch
 The heavens ordain ;
 For sight, that takes from prayer its hopeful breath,
 Is cruel death ;
 Oh ! give me wonder for the wave and wind,
 And reason blind.

4.

No suns for me, O God, that never shine
 On ways Divine,
 And kindle beams a pathway but to pave
 Unto the grave ;
 But ignorance I choose and reverent faith
 With veiled eyes,
 Which sees past Science with its garish wraith
 Yet bluer skies ;
 I ask more darkness for my mortal pains
 And tighter chains ;
 Give me Thy Love who beyond human light
 Thyself art Night.

TO THE BODLEIAN LIBRARIAN.

Friend, suckled with me at the same rude fount,
 Rough as the fabled Roman she-wolf's breast,
 While taught with me to climb the classic mount
 And drink the waters of a wild unrest.
 Ah, the fierce rapture of that sacred stream
 Poured in thy heart and hospitable mind
 The passion and the glory of a dream,
 And all the freedom of the ocean wind ;

And thou hast won this vision for thy own,
 Though I but humbly gaze on it from far,
 And passed through spaces yet unmapt, unknown,
 Beyond the footstep of the last faint star.

2.

Now crownèd as a king among thy books
 Thou sittest calm while subjects urge their plea,
 As a great rock that marks a thousand brooks
 Go babbling on down to the silent sea ;
 Innumerable servants round thee range
 And welcome are in every human speech,
 That note the fevered pulse of party change
 Or troubled tide of reason's utmost reach ;
 And all the thought of all the boundless earth
 Before thee spreads the riches of its stores,
 The secret of the air, the dew and dearth,
 And the dim murmur of untravelled shores.

3.

Each day to thee a hundred vassals bear
 Their gold and spices, and the precious gems
 Fit for the monarchs of the mind to wear
 And to adorn the sages' diadems ;
 The softest ripple of the farthest ray
 Just wafted to thee with its joy unspent,
 The song that dazzles for a summer day,
 The thunder of a nation's argument,
 The breath that trembles upon maiden lips,
 The blushing of the blossom at her feet,
 The tempest wrought of earthquake and eclipse,
 In the grand cycle of the ages meet.

4.

Electric lines through all the seas and lands,
 Where reignest thou in study long and lone,
 Obey the touch of thy compelling hands
 And bind the world as subject to thy throne ;

The treasures of the height and of the deep,
The flowers that sparkle on the breast of night,
Unfold to thee in thy majestic sweep
The inner sweetness of their hidden sight ;
Oh, thou hast glimpses there of Nature nude
And treadest where but veiled the angels dare,
In uncompanied awful solitude
Beneath the shadow of imperial care.

THE SCOURGE OF GOD (THE EPIDEMIC, 1891).

I.

We come from the fiery East,
From the land of the yellow face—
We come to the funeral feast,
To our own appointed place ;
From the dismal swamps that breed
Fever and woe and pain,
With the slimy toad and reed
And the belt of scorching plain ;
On the back of the stormwind's breath,
In the right of the judgment rod,
With our mission of doom and death
We come as the Scourge of God.

2.

We are sent by an awful Power
And its sentences we wreak,
And we laugh at the radiant flower
That glows on the maiden's cheek ;
We regard not the snows of age
Nor the fulness of the years,
And the bud in its opening stage
Folds up at our blasting fears ;
As we march on our silent path,
The thrones of the highest nod
And the bravest flee our wrath,
For we are the Scourge of God.

3.

We mock at the wisest plan
 As we hurry on to slay,
 All the barriers built by man
 Cannot bind our course a day ;
 For his false and foolish lore
 Tricked out in the learnèd names,
 And the medicines in his store,
 Are but fuel to our flames ;
 He may baffle the shot and shell
 And triumph as others trod,
 Against *us* there is no spell,
 For we are the Scourge of God.

4.

We follow the wake of sin
 As the shadow falls with night,
 When our armies enter in
 The angels have taken flight ;
 For we *must* perform our task,
 While we purge the temple floor
 And the guilty land unmask,
 As we knock at every door ;
 And the hidden vice starts up
 Though in pearls and purple shod,
 Though it grasps the golden cup,
 For we are the Scourge of God.

WAITING.

I have waited here in the winter sere,
 With the summer rose and rain,
 In my ashes cold and my bosom old
 Yet a living spark has lain.
 I have listened long to the evening song
 Of the blackbird in the brake ;
 To the scarlet sky I would gladly fly,
 Did my body but awake.

And I hearken still to the woodland rill,
As it babbles down the steep,
Over mossy stones with their broken tones,
Through the figured veil of sleep.
But they seemed afar, like a distant star,
Or a note of other years,
When the morning came in its flowers of flame,
With its hopes and happier fears.
I am waiting yet, I cannot forget
What I saw in the upper lands,
What my spirit felt when I blindly knelt
At the waving of white hands.
Is she coming soon with the silver moon,
In her beauty swift and sweet?
I shall lightly break from my tomb awake,
As the blossom at her feet.

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

The night was dark,
And ruin stark
Loomed threatening on our lee ;
The ship lay over on her side,
And in her beauty and her pride
Welcomed the brunt of wind and tide,
What made her faster flee ;
A bonny ship was she ;
And through the welter of the storm,
That gathered round us wet and warm,
We marked the ribbed rocks' giant form,
Across that lonely sea.

The wild blast blew,
The stout bark drew
Tight every rag she bore ;
And, like dumb driven creatures pained,

The tall masts trembled as they strained,
And still the tempest on us gained,
 While slow the grim night wore
 Beside that deadly shore ;
And with the beating salt spray blind,
We groped for what we scarce could find ;
A terror followed us behind,
 A terror went before.

 A sound of fears
 Was in our ears,
 And smote each troubled heart ;
A ghastly sound that seemed to mock,
We heard it in the sullen shock
Of breakers on the wrinkled rock
 Black staring from the chart,
 Where mercy had no part ;
Betwixt the breakers and their fall,
Was it the fatal Sirens' call
That flung in laughter over all
 Made the quick horror start ?

 Then, through the night,
 A sudden sight
 Drove right athwart our bows ;
One cry burst from each blanching lip,
As that gaunt shadow of a ship
Flashed full *against* the tempest grip ;
 Sweat brake from writhen brows,
 All raised despairing vows ;
Her sails were as the sheeted fire,
The masts rose in a flaming spire,
The ropes wore the same red attire
 As in some mad carouse.

Her keel, dear God,
Like lightning trod
In triumph on the deep

The hull was riddled through with rot,
With here a hole or bloody blot
And there the splinters of a shot,
Where dripping mould would creep
And faces seemed to peep ;
The serpent seaweed to her clung
And from the yards strange signals swung
The helmsman on his rudder hung
In silence as of sleep.

And as she flew
We saw her crew,
The corpses as of men ;
A moment fell the moonlight wan
In ghostly spurts and splashes on
Each grinning skull and skeleton,
That nodded there and then,
As dashed by demons' pen ;
And every long and bony hand
Straight pointed to the stony land,
As though they gave one stern command,
And passed beyond our ken.

And then we struck,
From keel to truck
She shivered at the blow ;
The good ship in her glory reeled,
Though bravely built and strongly steeled,
And cruel rocks her beauty peeled,
That made a gallant show
On many an ebb and flow ;
The breakers proved her fair sides soft,
That hammered on her hard and oft ;
While some poor souls were piped aloft,
And some went down below.

And from the wrack
One wretch came back,
But battered sore and pale ;

Who on him bears the branded fright
For ever of the accursèd sight,
Renewed when falls the dreadful night
 With the old haunted gale,
 That never can grow stale;
His tongue is like a funeral bell,
He looks a sinner plucked from hell
(On whom the flames have feasted well)
 To toll this awful tale.

“SHIP, AHOY!”

Our time was short,
And out of port
We hurried with despatches;
The moon rose yellow on our right
And clouds were gathering in their might,
The skipper feared a nasty night
 And battered down the hatches:
Her business well the *Seabird* knew
And white in straining canvas flew,
She laughed at any storm that blew
 And felt no more than scratches—
The boat with the despatches.

We cleared the buoy,
When “Ship, ahoy!”
Rang through the moans of thunder;
And, lo, a long and rakish craft,
Without one sail to give a waft,
Murk as the midnight fore and aft,
 A line of light all under;
Her spars were naked and each mast,
Like branches stript by winter’s blast,
And there in solemn silence fast
 She tore the surge asunder.
And louder grew the thunder.

Too late, too late,
 And grim as fate
 She bore upon us sweeping;
 Swift on the curling of the swell
 Which on each side in glory fell,
 Awful as death and dark as hell,
 One even pathway keeping;
 But, in the furrow of her track
 Which never altered from its tack,
 The waters closed up calm and black,
 Behind her dumbly creeping,
 As on she still came sweeping.

But not a trace
 Of human face,
 Nor any guiding token;
 We saw no sign of living thing,
 But horror with its sable wing
 Gloomed round us past imagining,
 And not a word was spoken;
 We heard no washing of the wave
 Which right and left its homage gave
 In silence dreadful as the grave
 The ages have not broken;
 There was no earthly token.

Straight for us bound,
 And without sound
 She drove right on our quarter;
 And in a moment sprang a crew
 Of armed men that awful grew,
 As nearer and more near she drew
 And ploughed the flaming water;
 The skipper swore a frightful oath
 And cursed us for our coward sloth;
 We ran a gun out nothing loth,
 And she seemed ripe for slaughter,
 Stem-down full on our quarter.

A shot, a cry
Of agony—
Or was it wind, or vision ?
We saw the rent and riven side,
Which to our challenge opened wide
And through it showed the shining tide,
Then shut as in derision ;
Again we fired, the good shot shore
Down those strange foemen by the score,
And up they started as before
Unto a fresh decision ;
But was it truth, or vision ?

A moment yet
And then we met,
The old ship gave one shiver ;
No time to wonder and to wait
Or hold her off with idle bait,
And through our very centre straight
She flew as shaft from quiver ;
We felt no shadow of a shock
Nor aught that would our tideway block,
We stood as steady as a rock
Or toy-boat on a river—
But for that gruesome shiver.

An icy blast
And all was past,
The moon stared dim and yellow ;
And as we scudded with the wind
In rolling mists that made us blind,
We cast our fearful looks behind
But could not see our fellow ;
She left no single mark or sound,
Although we swept the ocean round
Unto the sky-line's farthest bound ;
We saw, in distance mellow,
The low moon large and yellow.

SLEEP.

What is Sleep ?
 Shadows creep
 From their Dreamland, where they linger,
 And the forms of fancy dwell
 Bathed in peace ineffable,
 Firing all with rosy finger ;
 Shadows come, and gladly twine
 Fetters soft and sweet as blossom
 Plucked from dewy nooks divine
 Round the captured brow and bosom,
 Flowers that weep—
 This is Sleep.

What is Sleep ?
 Angels peep
 Out of halls of solemn vision
 Pillared up from earth to sky
 Into old eternity,
 While they laugh in low derision ;
 Fanning us with pure white wings,
 Loud with murmured message human
 As a maid's imaginings,
 Whom her love hath made a woman
 With its deep—
 This is Sleep.

What is Sleep ?
 Lips that keep
 Mysteries beyond our knowing,
 Breathed upon us as we lie
 Dead to earth but cannot die,
 Fair into the spirit flowing ;
 Fall of snowflakes trembling down
 But with hidden fire of kisses,
 Better than a monarch's crown,
 Gentler than the tender blisses
 Songbirds cheep—
 This is Sleep.

What is Sleep ?
 Thoughts that sweep
 Up and down a hundred stages,
 And would in their careless pride
 Broad as wash of ocean's tide,
 Round the riddle of the ages ;
 Riding to the tops of rest
 Where a calm delight is calling,
 On the Universal Breast
 In a hush of wonder falling
 Down the steep—
 This is Sleep.

SPRING.

The dear God He is busy now
 When wakes in green the gladsome Spring,
 He paints the butterfly's blue wing
 And roses on the evening's brow ;
 For of the music in His heart
 And of the colours in His hand,
 He gives to each its proper part
 And scatters jewels through the land.
 From out His winter home
 Within the starry dome,
 He steps into the stony dearth
 Of this poor waiting earth,
 And duly plies
 Fair ministries
 Of use
 Profuse.
 An unseen Workman, with the tools
 That turn to shining shapes
 All things, not as in human schools,
 Till not a weed escapes ;
 The brown loam sterile
 He forms a beryl,

And ruby graces
Cleave barren places,
The topaz and the emerald start up
In verdant mantle or with yellow cup.
But here He sets a maiden's blush,
And there a virgin flower,
And bids it robed in beauty rush
White to its perfect power.
He loves His mortal garden much
When the bright hours begin ;
And with a kind and quickening touch
He daily walks therein.
And now He throws the diamond's flame
That were a world's desire
On pastures' dull attire,
Or gives the desert a new name
And clothes with gems its naked shame,
Or sets the sea afire.
But then He takes a pearly tear,
A dewdrop from a heavenlier sky,
And hangs it in the happy eye
Of one whose love is holy fear.
In corners cold
The crocus gold
He weaves upon the carpet gray,
And snowy blooms
In greenwood glooms,
Like some blind child in careless play.
Round the coy hollow
Sunbeams twine,
And fleck and follow
Steps Divine,
And drive the dark and threatening shadows
From the frosty nook,
Or romp with breezes through the meadows
Smiling where they look,
And singing as they flash and fall
Upon the buds, that to them bow

And answer to the sunbeams' call ;
The dear God He is busy now.

O hark !

Up in the blue

The rapt and radiant lark,

In notes for ever fresh and true,

Pours fourth the passion of his burning breast,

The rippling stream, the broken clamour,

The praise, the wonder, the wild glamour

Of all the earth and all its glad unrest,

A vision of embodied fire,

A universal voice

Of vast desire,

“ Rejoice ! ”

And see, Oh ! see,

On every tree

And lispings leaf and humid blade,

The same sweet story

Of coming glory,

That bursts in blessings from the shade.

'Tis just His hand

That gives command

To all His works to do their duty

And music make,

While souls awake

To His new world of wealth and beauty.

On rock and rill

And haunted hill,

He strikes with His soft rousing hammer,

To loose their chains

And winter pains,

Though some may only sigh or stammer.

They hear, they know,

They feel the glow

Of gladness risen,

Within their prison ;

And the sweet juices

Of the earth

Break from their sluices
 Unto birth.
 And mark upon the uplands bright and arable
 He plants the splendour of His feet,
 Till stock and stone and clod proclaim the parable
 And in His sacred service meet.
 For He is working, working, working still,
 To mould each thing and creature to His will,
 With here a line, and there a finish
 That none may add to or diminish ;
 And in the pulses of the stir and strife,
 Eternity runs over in new life
 On wold and wood
 And maidenhood,
 That now with restless hopes and joys are rife
 And have withstood
 The icy edge of winter's cruel knife ;
 And all is good.
 The skies before Him veil their brow,
 And the dear God is busy now.
 From the broad breast of Nature
 Fountains run,
 And with the legislature
 Of the sun
 Uplift to awful stature
 Strength begun.
 The grasses and the foliage—aye, the mountains dance,
 With each fair bursting blossom
 And every vibrant bosom,
 In the green world of Love and loving circumstance ;
 Wave upon wave of Love
 And Life in bridal tether,
 From happy wells above
 Break on earth's coast together ;
 A bridal bond of utter gladness girds
 The throbbing land and heaven,
 And, from the kindling leaven,
 With insects' hum and babblement of birds

Leaps the young giant
 Called the Spring,
 Proud, self-reliant,
 Rioting
 In fruitful showers
 And his fresh powers ;
 For he is king.
 Ah, the first primrose from its dreaming
 Looks up with eye of yellow gleaming,
 And laughs to see the sunny lands
 Released from their old iron bands,
 That fettered them in vain—
 It looks, and laughs again.
 The daisy, that with modest hush
 Feels its great Maker's fingers,
 Who fondly round it lingers,
 Cannot but hide its face and blush ;
 It owns that mighty thrill
 Not of mere mortal skill,
 The touched rays tremble,
 None may dissemble,
 And cannot but before Him bow ;
 While shout the winds and waters,
 Throughout earth's farthest quarters ;
 For the dear God is busy now.

L'envoi.

And O the true and tender
 Infinite surrender,
 As of newly-wedded man and wife,
 And with a free affection,
 In the resurrection
 Of a God-intoxicated life.

THE DONKEY.

"The Lord *hath* need of him."—*Mark* xi. 3.
 Dear patient Ass, thy suffering voice
 Too often falls on breasts of stone,
 Although the Saviour made His choice

Of thee a season for His throne ;
He might have ridden upon the storm,
On thunder clouds or clouds of flame,
While lightning wrapt His rushing form
And guilty earth stood dumb with shame ;
Yet He, who wrought the mighty globe
And saw the centuried systems pass,
That were mere spangles on His robe,
Had need but of one lowly ass.

To many thou wert just a slave,
Foredoomed to care and crushing loads,
And only finding in the grave
The end of all thy weary roads ;
And yet a servant true and tried
In every burden on thee thrown,
Who deemed it little when he died,
Ill fed, unpitied and unknown ;
But I who see thy splendid worth,
Which dust and travail cannot bend,
Unhid below a homely birth,
Delight to count thee as a friend.

Dear patient Ass, no sense of time
Was planted in that humble heart,
Which seems to hear the Heavenly chime
And be of wider worlds a part ;
Perchance the wise Creator set
A secret hope in thee at first,
Which thou canst never more forget,
To bid thee for his Presence thirst ;
And so like Him thou hastest not,
While bearing what the worst may give,
Because thine is a larger lot—
Eternity—in which to live.

And now, if others mock the scars
Or scorn the awkward plodding tread,
I only mark a crown of stars

That pours a halo round thy head ;
I know the angels still are near
Thy pathway and to thee art kind,
And thou beholdest wonders clear
With visions to which we are blind ;
If want and woe with cruel barb
Should leave thee wounded, lame and lone,
Beneath thy rough and battered garb
I see the Saviour's radiant throne.

A GLIMPSE.

But then
Uprose the clash of arms and fighting men,
Where sword met sword. And through the leaden smoke
Red lines of demon figures reeled, and broke
In fiery fragments on a thunderous hill,
And rose and writhed a moment and lay still
As turned to stone. Thus iron wave on wave
Swept on in glory and but found a grave.
Shouts, groans and curses, cheers and shrieking shell
Stabbed through the struggle, as men flashed and fell
And others filled the ragged ranks, and on
The hurly-burly eddied and was gone,
But left great swathes of dreadful forms and brands
Of bloody things that lifted tortured hands
In vain to Heaven. The very wind seemed wet
With carnage and red mist of doom ; and yet
The dying horse with crimson nostril drank
In lust of battle, pawed the air, and sank
Hardly its stormy life stiffened by frost
At length. None counted there the awful cost.
But breast to breast and hand to hand, intent
Only on slaughter and by wounds unbent
They wrestled and knew not wherefore they died
Nor cared, in that grim furnace tost and tried
And shattered out of human shape. A strayed
Sweet woman child drew near and played

Bright on the brink of madness, and drew back
 To step once more on that tempestuous track,
 And clapt her baby hands in glee and bathed
 Her brow in hell that had the earth enswathed
 In murk of midnight. It was all a toy
 For her, a pageant, though it did destroy
 An empire; and with innocent shy face,
 She ran rejoicing to the trysting place
 Of all the terrors.

A LITTLE BIRD.

It was the evening hour
 When chimed the vesper bell,
 And like a scarlet flower
 The sunset flushed and fell
 On happy tree and tower,
 That answered, "All is well."
 And with the shadows came,
 Like flying joy or flame
 With all its fierceness gone,
 A little Bird
 Which hardly stirr'd
 The leaf it lighted on.

Its colour, who can say?
 Its beauty, who may know?
 The brightness of the day
 With the soft moonrise glow,
 Mingled with leaves at play
 And the wild waters' flow;
 In glory it was wreathed,
 A fragrant air it breathed
 Of music more than sight,
 That little Bird
 Which faintly chirr'd
 And whispered her "Good night".

It was the evening hour,
 When frolic fairies peep
 From every closing flower
 That would but cannot sleep,
 And moved by magic power
 From very gladness weep ;
 And like a wingèd Thought,
 Of light and laughter wrought
 And blessèd things to be,
 That little Bird
 I sweetly heard
 A message brought to me.

The meaning I know well,
 That thrilled my thirsty ear
 And made the bosom swell
 With pleasure kin to fear ;
 Its passion none may tell,
 So past all saying dear.
 In silence it had part,
 And murmured in my heart
 Just as the mourning dove,
 That little Bird
 One little word,
 And it was only Love.

URBS ORBIS.

I stood in that great City of the Dead,
 Where our thin life is but a passing day
 To wake the echoes of the awful tread
 Which shook the world on its imperial way ;
 When giants ruled, and in eternal stone
 Hewed their stern steps and made the common clods
 Speak, and in dreadful majesty alone
 Laughed, fought, and feasted as the very gods ;
 Who thought in marble, and their iron dream
 Of conquest with its universal care
 Left a fixed landmark in the ages' stream,
 To show how much a mortal hand could dare.

And there around me rose in ruined pride
 The monuments of all the gods, and men
 Like gods, built up by her whose stately stride
 Bridged the old world and deemed it little then ;
 To Beauty and to Passion and to Power
 Soared solemn temples that defied the dust,
 And quarried rock broke into deathless flower
 To every crowned and consecrated Lust ;
 Yea, supple Fraud found favour and a shrine
 With royal honours, and the leering face
 Of drunken Folly leaned from walls Divine,
 Imperishable, throned in splendid space.

There Vice was sceptred, that turned kingdoms pale
 Beneath its blasting shade, and cruel Crime
 Shone deified when poets told its tale
 Or history chose to make the sin sublime ;
 Force that swept low in its devouring flood
 Whate'er opposed the rush of eagle wings,
 And drank new life and blossomed out of blood,
 Had there a welcome and the seat of kings ;
 And there the tempest in triumphant sweep
 Seemed frozen in mid fury of its wave,
 That drew all peoples in its fateful deep
 And made the ghastly Peace that was the grave.

The conquering Wolf had left his footprints there,
 The crimson steps that after centuries still
 Reeked with the breath of death, and everywhere
 Had glorified the ugliness of Ill ;
 And altars rose to Infamy styled Fame,
 The Pride that fed and fattened on the life
 Of nobler things, and in the pomp of shame
 Arrayed itself for the unholy strife ;
 There worship roofed with stars the strong and rich
 And gave remorseless Hate a dazzling home,
 But Mercy found no altar nor a niche
 In the infernal splendour men called Rome.

KNIGHTS OF KNOWLEDGE.

Theirs no coat of cunning steel,
Crested helm or armèd heel,
 Flashing lance or sabre ;
Theirs no tyranny of might,
Mailèd hands that wrest the right
 From the serfs of labour ;
Theirs the sword that breaks in flower,
And the wisdom that is power
 Taught by book and college ;
Theirs contention that is love,
And the harness from above
 Meet for Knights of Knowledge.

Thought the weapon that they wield,
Proved on many a famous field
 By the soldier sages,
Passed along from sire to son
From the stars of Babylon
 Through the broadening ages ;
Thought that bright and brighter grew,
In the storms that idly blew
 On the path of Science,
Sharpened by the blows of hate,
And the demons at the gate
 Opening to reliance.

What but bigotry their foe,
And the error that is woe
 If in proud position,
And the ignorance that feeds
On the blind and blasted creeds
 Crawling to perdition ?
Ah ! they fight against the doom
Of deceit that dwells in gloom,
 Like some grim old giant,
And the dragon brood that still
Authors are of every ill,
 Damned but yet defiant !

Thus whate'er is found a lie,
 At their onset soon must die
 By the sword of Learning;
 For the progress of the brave,
 Though it be across the grave,
 Moves with no returning;
 They alone the light to live
 Can to reverent seekers give,
 If in cot or cloister;
 While the dogmas false from hell
 Miss, in striving for the shell,
 Pearls within the oyster.

JACK.

Sweet it is, amid the quarrels
 Of this jangling life,
 In a nobler strife
 Than for petty bells and corals,
 Sometimes yet to see the laurels
 Not of butcher's knife;
 And they grace thine honoured head
 Like the crown of morning spread
 On a mountain track,
 When the breezes give the message,
 Of a great and glorious presage,
 Jack.

First among the first, a scholar,
 Free from coward fears,
 Broadening with the years,
 Not a slave with gilded collar,
 Heaping not the dirty dollar
 Ground from drudges' tears;
 Hating sway of sceptred force,
 Wisdom at its sacred source
 Drinking, that shall never lack;
 Thou hast passed beyond the portal,
 Of this mean and creed-bound mortal,
 Jack.

Let the rabble rave of treason,
 Unto worn-out rites,
 Only meat for mites,
 Fools of empty form and season ;
 Be thou staunch to royal Reason,
 Which like kings requites ;
 Thou art marked for better things,
 Than the buzz of insect wings
 In their prison black ;
 Dread is learning's high anointing,
 Which is thy serene appointing,
 Jack.

Lean upon the staff of science,
 Facts that cannot err ;
 Like a Scaliger,
 Put in laws alone reliance
 And to dogmas bid defiance,
 Young philosopher ;
 Heir of every truth divine,
 That the human may refine
 From its follies' wrack,
 Forward, though the clouds may dim it,
 To the future without limit,
 Jack.

SCANDAL.

Fama malum quo non aliud velocius ullum, etc.

First a tiny timid whisper,
 Told by stealth in twilight hours
 By some petticoated lisper,
 Whom her single portion sours ;
 Just a hint, a doubtful question,
 Like the Serpent's asked of Eve,
 Seed of mischief, a suggestion
 Idly dropt and to deceive ;

Dropt among the neighbours itching
 For some lie behind the back,
 Ready for its fresh enriching
 With another coat of black.

Then a cloud it casts a terror
 On the maiden white as snow,
 Fed by folly and its error
 Direr than the downright blow ;
 Yet it thrives on lips of slander—
 Lips that play the Devil's part,
 And delight with hate to pander
 To the false and filthy heart ;
 Stealing from the mud its raiment,
 From the offal heap its breath,
 And demanding its repayment
 With dishonour worse than death.

Still it grows in bulk and boldness
 And yet sharper whets the knife,
 Breeds with calumnies a coldness
 Doom to husband and to wife ;
 Treads upon the strongest pledges
 In the safety of the dark,
 And behind convenient hedges
 Speeds the missile or the spark ;
 Takes religion for a leaven
 And pollutes its holy well,
 And degrades the robes of Heaven
 With the offices of hell.

Till it takes a solemn swagger
 For sweet hypocrites to see,
 And unsheaths the poisoned dagger
 Of the virtuous Pharisee ;
 Throws the mask of *ensor morum*
 Over deep and dirtier stains,
 And invokes the grave's decorum
 To make fast its rotten chains ;

And decries the *motes* of brothers,
With its undiscovered pelf
And big *beams*, and damning others
Only goes down damned itself.

NUDUS ARA, SERE NUDUS.

I.

I spread my fancy to the wanton breezes
And drift by any idle fortune led,
Careless if virtue snores and wisdom sneezes
Or some sweet Princess goes too late to bed ;
I weary am of all the cold conventions
That clog my feet and lengthen out my face,
I loathe the lies of those d——d good intentions
Paving the road to the Unmentioned Place ;
And now for freedom I have cut the cables
That only bind me to the faiths of fools,
I leave to them their pious forms and fables,
And all the cant of musty-fusty schools.

2.

Long have I starved on stale dry bread and butter
And danced like every cheated dolt in chains,
But here I sprawl in the congenial gutter
And kick away the clothes and prison pains ;
Let me for once throw off the paint and patches
Of stupid custom and the squeamish modes,
And with a blast of passion burst the hatches
That shut me into bleak and barren codes ;
What matter if I flutter the prim Quorum
Of frumps and fogeys by my actions rude,
That tear aside the curtain of Decorum
Exulting in their naughty licence nude.

3.

Hurrah for freedom and the muddy pavement,
 The beery breath of comrades with their crust
 Who have renounced the white shirt of enslavement
 And revel in their soil and kindred dust !
 Away with starch and stays that give but colic
 And cramp the heart in gilded shams and shows,
 When it would beat and bound in naked frolic
 To the wild tune of every wind that blows !
 I will not keep a crumb of sour tradition
 Though sweetened with some pleasant sin as sauce,
 Nor wear one rag of the old imposition,
 But follow Nature's own unfettered course.

4.

Let priests and peasants hug dead bones and babble
 Of mouldy rites that kill each kingly thought,
 Give me the drunken hiccough of the rabble
 And iron deeds on iron anvil wrought ;
 'Tis " better to be free than to be sober " *
 And plant sad harvests (if but yours the seed)
 Than garner the late fruits of chill October
 In some castrated monk's dull faultless creed ;
 And so I spread my canvas to the breezes
 To find the Graces in their glory nude,
 Though Piety through all its padding wheezes
 And tickles with sly hand the prurient prude.

MY HOUSEKEEPER.

In a little world of art,
 Decked with china pugs on presses
 And astounding shepherdesses,
 From the vulgar strife apart ;
 Full of shelves and curious corners,
 Pictures veiled like female mourners,

* Archbishop Magee.

Cupboards with the scent of spice,
Lavender, and all things nice,
 Dwells my excellent housekeeper
Famed for wisdom and her gown,
 One eye open when a sleeper,
Prim and portly Mrs. Brown.

All the servants style her Ma'am,
 And the harpies of the village
 Who delight good folks to pillage,
Rich in pity and in jam ;
 And the men of every station
 With profoundest veneration
Always doff for her their hats ;
Aye, the very dogs and cats
 Bow submissive, as she passes ;
And the tipplers at the " Crown "
 Cease their yarns and clink their glasses,
At the name of Mrs. Brown.

In her crisping black silk frock,
 Down the groaning stairs majestic
 On the careless gay domestic
She comes swooping with a shock ;
 And of work she is so jealous
 That the idlest page grows zealous,
When she in the distance looms,
Looking awful mops and brooms ;
 And the boldest rats and vermin,
At the vision of her frown,
 With a common fear determine
To avoid my Mrs. Brown.

Burglars breaking in my store,
 With their grip upon the handle
 Of that chest from Coromandel,
Bolted when they heard her snore ;

Yes, and left that priceless coffer
And the jewels it would offer—
Cleared the window at a jump,
Deeming it was the Last Trump;
So I take my early diet
And in safety lay me down,
Or abroad can range in quiet,
Ramparted by Mrs. Brown.

BULLDOG AND WOLF.

As we lay
In Plymouth Bay,
With our vessel taut and trim,
Fled a fishing boat to say
She had spied at blush of day,
Like her bloodhounds gaunt and grim,
Spain's fell Pirate looming black
On a goodly trader's track,
Stern and straining
Still and gaining
Fast and faster, till they might
Hear at last the timbers crack
In the fury of her flight,
And the raining
Bullets belched in leaden blight;
Aye, they saw
The Pirate draw
Near and nearer to the prize,
Cutthroats all outside the law,
Darkly driven
And unshriven—
Marked the hunger in their eyes
Murderous red as stormy skies,
When by lightning wrapt and riven—
As we lay
In Plymouth Bay.

And we swore
As none before,
While we drank confusion deep
To the raiders on our shore
And the robbers of our store,
Who had often roused from sleep
Helpless souls to sword and fire
And the doom of demons' ire—
Child and woman,
To inhuman
Tortures and more hellish lust
And their homesteads' burial pyre
Dancing to the midnight gust,
Which the foeman
Burnt and blasted down to dust ;
Well we knew
The strong wind blew
Straight and steady for our end,
As we now with vengeance flew
Forth with bounding
Hearts, confounding
Buccaneers that touched a friend
And could only wreck and rend ;
Ah ! we needed little hounding,
And we swore
As none before.

Then we met
Like iron set,
Wolf and bulldog fierce for fight,
As they never struggled yet,
Till the crimson deck was wet,
And the scuppers ran outright ;
Oh ! we hung upon her flanks,
Riddled through her sides and planks,
Hung and worried
Her and hurried
To destruction, fleshed our teeth,

Mowed the ruffians down in ranks,
While above the funeral wreath
 O'er them scurried,
And each gun spat flame beneath ;
 Shot and shell
 Tolled out their knell,
And we boarded her and clung,
 Closed and hustled them to hell,
 With the streaming
 Cutlass gleaming,
While a merry tune it rung ;
Till upon the yards they swung,
 Branded by its bloody seaming ;
 When we met
 Like iron set.

And we lay
 In Plymouth Bay,
With our ghastly prize in tow,
 Ere the sunset of that day
 Which had made the spoiler pay
And his black rag hauled below ;
 But our sweethearts were not slack
 When we took that homeward tack,
 As with blushing
 Cheeks and flushing
Eyes, they moored alongside then
 And as heroes welcomed back
Weary lads and wounded men,
 To the gushing
Tears that cleansed our slaughter pen ;
 Cheers and chimes
 And poets' rhymes
Greeted us, and every street
 Flowered in flags those golden times,
 And in wonder
 Echoed under
At ten thousand tramping feet,

Come to make our crown complete
 With the glory of their thunder ;
 As we lay
 In Plymouth Bay.

CHRISTMAS EVE—
 A LEGEND OF THE CHRIST.

The Baby Christ is out to night—
 Ah ! ring the joy-bells low !—
 The clouds take glory in His flight,
 The wan moon veils its altar light
That He should suffer so—
That He should suffer so.

Dear God, that Thou must ever be
 Thus Self-condemned and lone to flee,
 A leaf upon the wind,
 A wave that cannot reach the shore,
 With all eternity before—
 Eternity behind !
 That Thou shouldst wear an Infant dress,
 And in that Infant helplessness
 For ever sadly roam,
 Tost up and down Thy palaced earth
 Within the very heart of dearth,
 Beyond the reach of human mirth,
And still without a home—
And still without a home !

The Baby God is out to-night,
 An exile for our sin
 That hugs a heart of leprous blight,
 With its red harlot beauty bright ;—
Will no one let Him in—
Will no one let Him in ?

For this is Christmas Eve
 When men their labours leave
 And children holly weave,
 To keep a holy tryst
 With the dear Baby Christ,
 That He may be sufficed.
 They mock the winter snow,
 That sees a springtide glow
 In the green mistletoe.
 The hall in pillared pride,
 The cottage at its side,
 Their doors thrown open wide.
 But not for Him the sheltering rafter,
 Nor happy eyes that swim
 And overflow with love and laughter
 To echo on through life hereafter ;—
For every one but Him—
For every one but Him.

Sometimes with Baby hand He knocks
 And thrills the distant stars,
 While the great earth's foundation rocks—
 But not our bosom bars ;
 Sometimes outside the lattice frame
 He lingers in the gloom,
 Betwixt our shadow and our shame,
 And calls some cherished soul by name,
That finds for Him "no room"—
That finds for Him "no room".

And then upon the tempest flying
 Goes forth the Christ a Baby crying
 Some softer breast to win,
 And vainly tries each guarded portal
 With gifts of precious things immortal ;
Will no one let Him in—
Will no one let Him in ?

Then wearied with His hopeless quest
 Without the frolic and the feasts,
 He seeks once more a lowly rest
 Among His own rough kinder beasts,
 To snatch a moment's refuge blest
 Again in the old manger,
 A blindly-known and honoured guest
 Of brutes and welcome to their best,
 And there not all a stranger—
 And there not all a stranger.

Oh! it is true the Baby Christ
 The wicked world so dearly priced,
 He laid His heavenly garments down
 And set aside His royal crown;
 With utter speed
 He came indeed,
 In Infant's guise
 And loving-wise,
 To set us free
 From gramary
 Of evil power
 Which has its hour.

But when He reached this islet bald
 Of emerald,
 A speck that hardly leaves a trace
 In awful Space,
 An ocean drop, a grain of sand,
 Upon thy strand,
 Eternity, He found no kiss
 Nor greeting bliss,
 But only met the cruel ban
 Of brother man,
 Who hailed the falsehood and the fight
 But not the Light
 And banished for a crownèd Death
 The Living Breath,

That made the earth for mercy's sake
 And could unmake ;
 Yea, all (except within the tomb)
Left Him no room—
Left Him no room.

His world was blind,
 His kin unkind.
 And so He bade an angel wear
 His livery of love,
 And in His Name the burden bear
 We could not raise above,
 And be like Him the Son of Man
 Who in our weakness trod
 This human world a little space,
 And as the Son of God.
 He gave him strength to suffer much
 And with His pity bless,
 And dowered him with the dreadful touch
 Of His Almightyness.
 But then He stopped an Infant still
 And played an Infant part
 With all its helpless art,
 If He might fashion to His will
 And with His Spirit's freedom fill
 One true and tender heart,
 And thus He wanders lone and late
 To seek His mortal kin,
 Outside the Christmas din,
 And knocks at every breast and gate ;
Will no one let Him in—
Will no one let Him in ?

The Baby Christ is out to-night—
 O hush the festive song !—
 The dance and tumult of delight
 Would only do Him wrong.
 Dost think it is the waters' wail,

Or the distempered wind
That calls when other voices fail,
And wanders lost and blind ?
Ah, no, it is the Baby God
Who evermore must fly,
And bleeding from the earthly rod
Lifts up His bitter cry.
The stocks and stones
In startled tones
Their wondering witness cast,
And little birds
Like wingèd words
Wake up as He goes past.
Yea, bird and beast
From west to east
Drink music from His mouth ;
Thistle and thorn,
The eve and morn
Hail Him in north and south.
And between whiles
He sadly smiles,
Till all things feel His power ;
And sunny lands
At His commands
Burst into blushing flower.
And now His cry
Fills earth and sky.
Dost think it is the winter rain
That comes in poverty and pain,
And beats the glass and beats again ?
Ah, no, it is His human tears
That fall as they have fallen for years,
And mingle with our hopes and fears.
Those pearly fountains
Shake the mountains,
And reach through space's utmost part ;
They purge our pleasures
With their treasures,

That flow from out His broken Heart.

His tears must so

For ever flow.

Dost think it is the peevish blast

That homeless travels far and fast,

And is an outcast yet at last?

Ah, no, it is His pleading voice,

So sorrowful it hath no choice

But weeping, when it would rejoice.

He talks in each

Frail infant form,

The same sad speech

That thrills the storm.

Dost think it is the lapsing leaf

That rustles as it drops,

And hides its restless hunted grief

Low in the murmuring copse?

Ah, no, it is His Baby feet,

That ere they touched the earth

They came in graciousness to greet,

Were exiled from their birth.

But yet they fall,

Unseen by all.

And still outside the bolted door

He hears the joy begin,

But may not walk one banquet floor

That without Him is mean and poor;—

Will no one let Him in—

Will no one let Him in?

His Baby fingers hardly hold

The peaceful holly branch

That would our struggling staunch,

In the great hunger of the cold,

While round it timidly they fold

(As they have claspt since suns grew old)

The love that fain would launch

Out into slum and iron wold

And sunless mines of blood-bought gold.

But, as the leaflets toss
 Back on the troubled wind
 That is not all unkind
 And mourns the world's wide loss
 And humbly walks behind,
 They seem the Holy Cross;
 And every pouting point
 Above Him, as he sails,
 From every armed joint
 Bursts into crimson nails.
 And dost not see upon the glass—
 Upon the glass,
 The tracing of His dear white fingers—
 His dear white fingers,
 That gently wrote when He did pass—
 When He did pass,
 Their passion tale that fondly lingers—
 That fondly lingers
 Till morning light,
 In letters bright
 Of silver frost—
 The mercy lost?
 O it is softly sadly written
 Upon our fretted panes,
 Deep by the wintry sculpture bitten
 In gleaming stars and stains—
 Yea, on those strange and storied windows
 With their new glory dim,
 That sign the Holy Rood,
 And would unclothe to heathen Hindoos
 Or any idol mood,
 But open not to Him—
 But open not to Him.

 And sometimes on His head,
 Or sometimes on His shoulder
 When it has waxen bolder,
 The Robin dares to tread;

And from the weird moonshine
 Poured in a mystic flood
 It stands out half Divine,
 A patch of sacred Blood.
 O hear it twitter
 Past and fly,
 Blent with His bitter
 Baby cry!
 The children with their chilly thumbs
 That on the window tap,
 Scatter the Redbreast all their crumbs
 But offer Him no scrap;
 No crust of kindness
 In their blindness
 Great and grim,
 No drop of pity
 In the city,
 Falls to Him.
 But thus He wanders to and fro
 Betwixt the starlight and the snow,
 For sufferers thwart and thin
 And man's exceeding sin;
 Foxes have holes, and in its nest
 Each little bird a while may rest;
 Will no one let Him in—
 Will no one let Him in?

 The Baby Christ is out to-night—
 O shall our pleasures bloom?—
 The universe is all His right,
 Not thorns that only mock His plight;
 Yet we make Him "no room"—
 Yet we make Him "no room".

 The dog, the Pariah finds a ditch,
 The sempstress with her woe
 Who strikes dear life into each stitch,
 Has yet a nook below;

The gipsy skulking by the hedge,
 The infant in its cot,
 The wretch on winter's keen knife-edge,
 Have all some resting-spot.
 The sailor on the billow,
 The murderer in his cell,
 Have still some sort of pillow,
 And devils even in hell ;
 But in the whirl and welter
 And blast so fiercely iced,
 Where is the warmth or shelter
 For the cold Baby Christ ?

Alas ! there is no rudest bed
 In shadows bright or dim,
 By jewelled hand or seamed outspread
 To cradle His dear bruised head ;—
No corner left for Him—
No corner left for Him.

Too long with the rough wind He wrestles,
 That beauteous Baby Form
 Which rides upon the storm ;
 None brings Him food or brimming vessels,
 But winding sheets and coffin tressels ;
 The snowflakes round Him swarm ;
 And once more with His beasts He nestles
 Safe in the manger warm.
 But sore He toils and may not tarry,
 And forth again He fares
 As Mercy only dares,
 Who on His Heart alone must carry
The world and all its cares—
The world and all its cares.

The Baby Christ is out to-night—
 Ah, ring the joy-bells low ! —
 And sounds of weeping and affright
 Stab through the cheery glow.

It dulls the loud and cruel mirth,
 It dims the shining robe,
That voice which puts a piteous girth
 Of prayer around the globe.
The goodly gold, the radiant gems
 It turns to dusty dross,
And hangs about the holly stems
 The shadow of the Cross.
The wiser kine look up and call
 The Master whom they greet,
And through the tempest catch the fall
 Of His most gentle feet,
That rest a moment as they pass
 Upon the lowly byre,
And leave for humble ox and ass
 A print of blessed fire.
 The little child
 By winter wild
Tost up and down, that tumbles
 In icy snow
 And to and fro
Yet farther strays and stumbles,
 Sees through the dark
 That saving spark
Beyond the whirl and welter,
 And steadfast flies
 With straining eyes
Straight to the happy shelter;
 And quick to raise
 A sob of praise
To Him who is all blessing,
 Feels to him prest
 A Baby's breast—
A Baby's warm caressing,
 And (as he slips)
 A Baby's lips
Set on his own, in tender
 Sweet sudden power

That bursts in flower,
Till all the night is splendour.
But though that Infant is our Light,
And stands betwixt their doom,
And wanderers weary for His sight
Who darkly welcome bane and blight,
Yet we find Him no room—
Yet we find Him no room.

Oh! sometimes on the moonlight sheet
Of the fair virgin snow
We see his wondrous Baby feet,
Roses of afterglow!
And we are sure the very Christ,
Whom never rank or wealth enticed
To silken sin below,
Has gone in mercy just that way
And left behind a tell-tale ray,
Love's fervent overflow.
And when from rifted purple cloud
That breaks in gleaming bars
Step forth two brighter stars,
While winds abroad are not so loud
And the whole heavens are pale and proud,
It is His glorious eyes
That, in compassion for our race
Blind to the beauty of His Face,
Bend from the listening skies;
For softly thus
They shine on *us*.
And when within its cot
Thy baby nestles not,
And lonely is thy lot,
Dear mother;
Then upon Christmas Eve,
When children holly weave,
Comes, while you fondly grieve,
Another;

And lays His golden Head
 Down on the dazzled bed,
 And is thy Babe instead,
 And Brother.
 He takes the empty chair
 With kissing lips and hair,
 A thousand times more fair
 And winning,
 Than any mortal child
 That ever sweetly smil'd
 Upon a world defil'd
 And sinning;
 He cradles in thy heart,
 And is a living part
 Of all the love thou art
 Beginning;
 Although it looks a gleam
 Of but a passing dream;
 And thou thyself art far
 From Him;
 As the most distant star
 And dim—
Thyself art far
From Him.

The Baby Christ is out to-night—
 Must it be ever so?—
 The winds are waking for the fight
 And loud their trumpets blow.
 And still the story
 Of His glory
 Is music for all ears,
 And still the fashion
 Of His Passion
 Is sunshine to our fears;
 And still man only
 Leaves Him lonely
 At feasts His love has spiced,

And still the manger
 Is no stranger
 To the sweet outcast Christ.
 And no one yet
 Will pay the debt.
 And but for those dear Baby hands,
 That bear the burden of all lands
 And reach and rule throughout all Time,
 While suns and seasons change and chime,
 And mould the myriad worlds of Space
 To wondrous stepping-stones of grace,
 The solid earth would faint and sink
 And into dust and shadow shrink—
 But for those wee white Baby hands,
 That pillar seas and skies and lands.
 There goes His bitter cry,
 For us and every sin,
 Now He is passing by
 And mourns exceedingly;
Will no one let Him in—
Will no one let Him in?

LOVELY WOMAN.

Women are of clay and gold,
 Simple but mysterious creatures,
 Single-hearted, manifold;
 And they differ
 From us not alone in features
 And their making, but in mind,
 By some law,
 And grow stiffer
 And conveniently blind,
 When we thaw;
 They assume more starch and stays,
 When we tremble
 And pour out the warmest rays
 Of the love that almost stays,

Which we can't in proper ways
 Now dissemble.
 And their *no* means often *yes*,
 Lips that flout would fain caress,
 Cold hands splendid in their spite
 Though repelling do invite;
 And the face that flees with laughter
 Half averted,
 Half asserted,
 Calls on you to follow after—
 If you only have the wit
 And can read the welcome writ
 On that flying
 Form defying
 All your efforts, all your art—
 Glancing round
 With shy charms,
 And would nestle on your heart
 Or be wound
 In your arms.
 Don't believe one half they say,
 Language merely is a mask
 Of their feelings
 And their fancies
 When they really wish to play
 And be wooed, but will not ask
 Those revealings
 And romances
 Which compose a woman's way,
 Mixed with steelings,
 Dew and dances,
 And full moons wherein they bask.
 Yes, they differ from us quite,
 Women wonderful and white,
 In confessions
 And transgressions
 Light and lovely as a fan
 Which would never move a man,

In a thousand thousand lights,
In a thousand thousand shades,
Deep as rapture of the nights,
Tender as the green grass-blades
Of the meadow,
Now in shadow,
Now in shine,
But still human, still Divine—
Always human,
Always woman.
And they differ too in kind,
In the framework of the mind
And their purpose, not as we
From each other in degree.
Sternest facts
And stormy trifles,
Broken pacts
And hate that stifles,
Faded loves,
With jests and gloves,
And roses, ribbons,
Mirth and mystery,
And a casual peep in Gibbon's
Temple with its columned history,
Strong devotion to one end
And one friend,
Pathways by the waves and willows
Leading to the primrose pillows
Fringed with pretty soul and feather
Run together,
And a passion
Beyond fashion
Single-minded,
Purely blinded,
And a heart's whole consecration
More than queenly coronation
With its gnôsis
Radiant as apotheosis—

Such is woman,
Such her life,
Sweetly human,
Maid or wife ;
Though her being
Is not seeing,
Is not knowing,
But keeps flowing,
Quite beyond our plane and orders
And our acts,
All betwixt its own strange borders
Outside facts,
With that terrible devotion
(Fair in *her*)
But to one supreme emotion
Which may err,
And is oft as wild and stupid
In its glow
As a Cupid
Without arrows and a bow.
For they differ from us madly,
Differ sadly,
Differ badly,
But are grander, truer still
In their instincts even to ill,
Than the sensual selfish man
Smelling of the kitchen pan,
And with sordid petty greed
In his highest, broadest creed ;
They can quite forget themselves
And the purse and cupboard shelves,
Though yet guided not by reason,
Not by right,
In their flight
Through the night ;
But by any whim or treason
Out of measure, out of season—
Not by rule

Though at Yule,
But by petulant affections
Which defy the plain directions
And go up
Or go down,
With the same capricious fire
'Twixt a cup
And a crown,
And with one insane desire.
Woman's name they say is weakness ;
No, with all her holy meekness,
And consent
To a frailty that is finer
And diviner
Than the hero's vast intent,
When she throws her soul and body
And a heart ashamed of shoddy
In the crucible
Of a love above our laws
That to her are still reducible,
And as straws—
Is she weak or rather iron,
Who renouncing the home rafter
And the present and hereafter,
Though a hundred hells environ,
Goes to meet a certain death,
As if but a passing breath
Or as putting on her gloves—
If she loves ?
What have wives and mothers done,
And the maiden
Early laden
With a burden not for one,
Such as Atlas never bare
Who upheld a world of care ?
What have suffering women not
Dared or done, who with a kiss
Or a laugh took the abyss,

And within the melting-pot
Of an Etna flung their all
And themselves at passion's call,
Not to win a tardy shrine
But because they *were* divine?
 They have sought
 Past our ken
Goals of exquisite delusion,
 They have wrought
 More than men
If in beautiful confusion,
 They have fought
 In their den
With a calm sublime intrusion
 With the lions
 And the scions
 Of all Ill,
Through their conquering woman's will ;
 Moving mountains,
 Drawing fountains
 From the rocks,
 Bearing queenly
 And serenely
 Earthquake shocks.
When I picture woman now,
 Blessed woman,
 Very human,
I descry an upturned brow
 And sweet eyes
 To the skies
Truly delicately pointing,
 And bright hair
 Wondrous fair
With a mystical anointing ;
As if all her spirit's leaven
 Were pure heaven.
And I see her sunny hands
Waving to the lofty lands,

Gently waving,
Softly saving
Prostrate souls that grope in mire
With their ministry of fire ;
And I see the fatal dart,
Plunged in her own shielding heart.
But when I
Long to think
Her the triumph of perfection,
In her beauty and election
Poised between a song and sigh,
And a gold connecting link
With the awful Powers on high
Standing at the heavenly brink
Of Divinity brought nigh,
In her saintly white and pink ;
Then I see
Wistful glances looking back
Fond and free
On another earthlier track,
To the clay
Of a way
By her angel moments chidden
And forbidden,
Where she sometimes goes astray
With a glee that is not hidden ;
And the angel who has stormed
Starry heights,
God's delights,
Then is horribly transformed
Into something fair and false,
Sere and salse,
And with serpent convolutions
And sweet sound
Winding round
Men and mighty institutions,
Till they fall
Faith and all.

Ah ! I see her
Then and flee her
With her swelling bosom bare
And the lust that cannot spare,
Looking back,
With her rosy limbs of fire
Gleaming through their frail attire,
And insatiable desire,
On a black
Moonlit track
With the warmest of caresses
And the dearest lovelinesses,
Flame and snow,
Frost and glow,
All the grace above, below,
Clouds of glory for her tresses,
Dew and bloom from day and night,
All the best of dark and bright,
Spirit, body, sense and soul
Mingled in a maddening whole,
With the gladness
And the sadness
Of the blossom of the years,
Writ in laughter and in tears ;
With a vagrant
Charm and fragrant
Air, that passes as you close
With the treasure
And the pleasure
Of an evanescent rose,
Which bequeaths you but the scent
Of a cheated ravishment
And a dream of perfect pose
With delicious discontent ;
Tempting, mocking,
Tempting still,
Though the weak and weary rocking
To the rest

On her breast
That may comfort but must kill ;
 Always tempting,
With the passions that will peep
Through her soft uncurtained sleep,
 Not exempting
Sinners whom she truly teaches
But bewitches as she preaches,
And when she says " Worship God
And from naughty visions flee,"
Means with pretty pout and nod,
 " Worship me " .
 Ah ! the knowledge
 Of the college
Never yet has taught men how
 On the brow
Of a woman in her joy
Falls a sunrise that is more
Than the light on any shore,
Unto which it is a toy—
How unutterable grace
 Fills her face,
From the woods and fields and waters
 And the Naiads
 And the Dryads
Or the misty mountain daughters ;
 How the moonshine
 And the noonshine
Both are married in her eyes
 With the skies,
Blue and grey in blessed gleams
Big with all delights and dreams ;
How from her pure parted lips
 Honey drips,
 Music slips,
And the kisses for which wealth
Would surrender gold and health
Fall and sting like living whips ;

How the colour comes and goes,
 Ebbs and flows,
 Pales and glows,
On the canvas of her cheek
Painted by the thoughts that seek
 Utterance and cannot find,
 Flitting as the wave and wind—
On the curves so round and sleek,
 And the mirror of the mind ;
 How the spell,
Artless, indefinable,
By her dainty manner breathed,
As the perfume of a song
Heard but once yet cherished long,
 Is enwreathed
Round and through her inmost being,
 Fixed and fleeing
 As you wonder, and more fair
 Then returning like an air
From above, a haunting grace
 On the face,
 In the hair,
But without a settled place
 For the winning
Of the boldest heart or hand,—
Grace to conquer and command
And in death anew beginning.
Wisdom never told us why,
 In her eye
Meet and mingle all the pages
 Of the ages,
 Earth and sky,
Time and calm eternity ;
Why her lucent limbs are moulded
In one way, and she is folded
As a mystery to read
 Only thus,
 And for us

Meant to follow who would lead,
In a fashion amorous
Which need hardly pause to plead ;
 Why her duty
 Is but beauty,
And a glance from her upsets
Empires built by bayonets,
 Bearded lips,
 Iron ships,
Ever since fair Helen came
In the glory of her shame
And the wonder of her frame,
And the splendour of her fame,
 Just to kindle
Such a frenzy, such a flame
As may never, never dwindle
While men's hearts abide the same,
 And the spindle
Meets the all-unequal sword
 And is lord.
 When have sages
Who have trodden world-wide stages,
 Told us whence
Woman draws omnipotence
And her cast-off faded flower
 Has more power
In the silly empty stress
Of its utter nothingness,
Than the dark and dreadful tower
Bristling with a hundred guns,
And the blinding blazing fire
 In their ire
As of many, many suns ?
Whence her voice of subtle charm
 That in secret rose or fell,
Marvellous to help or harm,
 Deeper than the depth of hell,
Higher than the height of heaven,

Calls it magic
Sweet and tragic,
And the leaping of its levin
Unto which we humbly stoop
And from which we cannot flee
Who prefer not to be free,
Though we droop
And before it helpless lie—
Though we die?
Whence her strength and from what sources,
Flowing on,
Flowing on,
In the rapture of its courses,
Flowing on,
Flowing on,
With the freshness of new forces
That without her never shone?
Whence her innocence was born,
In what morn
Far away upon the summit
Where the rose has not a thorn,
In abysses which no plummet
Yet has sounded
And no fancy ever rounded,
Though it were the most forlorn?
If in waking worlds, on hoary
Top of sacred promontory,
It descended like a dove
From above,
And took refuge in the blossom
Of her bosom,
With the greatness of its love,
A white dove?
Whence she got that noblest nature,
Awful stature,
And the fulness of virginity
Jewelled though in harlot frame
With the solemn legislature

Of a sacrosanct infinity
 Without name ;
Scarce of earth so lightly trod,
Half a child and half a God ?
 When did mortal
 At the portal
Of the citadel of Truth,
Tell us whither woman clothed
In the royalty of youth
 And betrothed
But to beauty, not to man,
 Now is tending
 Now is wending,
In the compass of her plan
Rising like the rainbow span,
 If ascending,
 If descending
To the springs whence life began ;
Whither she is sweeping all
With the music of her call,
If to wedding-robe or pall,
 In her tender
 Fatal splendour—
To Creation or the Fall ?
 Or if hither
 And then thither,
At the passing moment's beck,
 She is guiding
 And deriding
Us and lightly luring whither
None return who come to wreck,
With no purpose, with no will
But to wreak the direst ill
Anywhere and anyhow,
With the sunset on her brow ?
 With no balance
In her being, with no end
Save to ravin and to rend,

And as heedful of the valance
 Of the sofa or the chair
 As the honour of a friend,
 Which she never could repair ?
 With no ballast, with no strong
 Principle to stay and steer,
 For a song
 Or the chance of better cheer
 Selling one and selling all ;
 Like a ball
 Tossing duty to and fro
 In her guile,
 With a smile
 Cruel as the winter snow ?
 Hungry Science
 With its husks and doleful tales
 And reliance
 In its peddling scoops, and scales
 On the eyes as in the hand,
 Never yet could understand
 Wondrous woman,
 Who is more than dust and gases
 For retorts and probes and glasses,
 And is human ;
 Not to be just pinned and throttled
 And incised,
 Analysed,
 Classified and corked and bottled,
 Labelled, libelled, Aristotled,
 Shelved and all dehumanised ;
 As if but a wart or wen,
 Or another
 Specimen ;
 Not a glorious wife or mother
 And a spirit who can free us
 From the closeness
 Of our grossness,
 But a kind of *scarabæus* ;

Yes, a subject to be pat in
With a little Greek and Latin—
 French might do—
If they can but keep the cat in
Their prodigious bag of tricks
Full of fads and fiddlesticks
 And their prophets—Heaven knows who,
Patched about with silk and satin
 And a little English too.
She may be just food for fables
Or the red dissecting tables ;
 Or a sermon,
 For a German
With his spectacles and surds
 And the dew not dew of Hermon
And sesquipedalian words,
 Undecided,
 Subdivided,
Traced with here and there a chasm
And with now and then a spasm,
To the first primæval point
Without gender, without joint
Which as king we now anoint—
 Protoplasm ;
Down the muddy stream of time
 With a hobbling
 And a wobbling
Gait that grows at last sublime ;
Till the tiny spot of jelly
Has achieved a brain and belly,
 And the joys
 Beyond toys
Of a differentiation
With a weakness for Orelli
And a taste for Francatelli
Which is quite an education,
And the thing is really sexed
And becomes a proper text

Of the knife,
With its life
For the nearest rack or rope
Or the next
Muddle with the microscope.
Then at last the thing (mere matter)
Growing fatter
Is an instance or a case
For the interminable chatter
Of the dolts that splash and splatter,
Or beginning of a base
For a spry
Theory,
And the stuff dupes feed upon,
Or a metaphor
None is better for
In a musty lexicon.
This is certain,
This is sure,
Man can never
By the most astute endeavour
With or without the old curtain
Now dispense with woman pure,
Whole and simple;
And the dimple
Rules and fools the conquered lands,
East and west,
North and south;
And the maiden's magic wimple
With the gleaming of white hands
Coaxing to her balmy breast
And the scarlet of her mouth,
Wake a passion
More than Fashion,
Make the hero of an age
Drop his laurels
And magnificence of quarrels
On a universal stage.

And for one
I prefer the woman's sceptre,
To the biggest exploit done
By a statesman's wiles adepter
In mere law
And the waiting on events,
With his mouldy precedents
And the awe
But of office and its whips,
Yet the slave of laughing lips.
I prefer the dainty throat
With its throbs,
And the rustle
And the bustle
Of the pretty petticoat,
To the brazen party jobs.
Fallen stars
Fair and frail as Potiphar's
Naughty spouse,
I would rather hail and house—
Always in a proper way—
Than the prude who sneers at Byron
And has not a dash of clay
In her maxims of cast-iron
Death to any sort of Siren,
And can only curse and pray.
Give me woman
Frank and human,
With her tenderness supreme
Down to the last sobbing breath,
Facing death
And the agony extreme;
With her patience and her trust
Flowering from the charnel dust,
And her courage more than man's
In its mean and measured plans
For salvation
And its chilly calculation;

With her trifles
And her tricks
And her pettish wayward turns,
More convincing than the rifle's
Argument and golden sticks ;
While the fire celestial burns
In her bosom, half an altar
 Raised to God,
 Half the sod
Seat of ebon funeral urns,
Wherewith none may hope to palter,
Which like Fate can never falter,
Whence no willing love returns.
 Give me woman
 As a foeman,
If she may not be a mate,
With a little bit of scandal
 And the spice
Of some splendid sin or vice
And her unrelenting hate,
Though a fortune be the candle ;
Not the ermined fool of State,
 With his handle
And the plundered silver plate ;
Let me be her dusty sandal
Or the doll she loves to dandle,
Rather than attend the prate
 Of the heedless
 And the needless
Politician, with the lie
 In his eye,
Which in words he never utters,
 Though he stutters
On and flounders into messes
And most hopeless wildernesses
Half unmeaning, half untrue ;
 While he butters
Bread of office with the oil

That may sweeten but must soil,
If the Devil gets his due ;
With his educated stammer,
And bad grammar.
Better powder, better paint
Than the saint
Who is but a clumsy libel
On the Bible,
And condemns without a voice
Without choice,
Any female thing that strays
But an inch from beaten ways,
And is not demurely foxy
Like the sisters who rejoice
In their barren orthodoxy
And their boa-constrictor stays.
Better Hallelujah Jane
With her jumping,
With her stumping,
With her thumping
Which may break a window pane
Or a heart or idol fane,
Who keeps pumping
Nothing out of nothing still
With a will ;
Than the bigot with her forms
And her rigid
Rules and frigid
Rites, allowing not for storms
In a teacup, nor one pace
Just outside her chosen place,
Nor a healthy wild emotion
With devotion ;
Weighing in her narrow scale
The exact amount and tale
For each sinner,
What he may enjoy at dinner,
How he may in safety sup

And the colour of his cup
Or the matter
Of his platter,
When he must rejoice or grieve,
What he may or mayn't believe ;
Always guiding
And providing
Every jot and every tittle
With her little
Legislature
And her art,
But omitting human nature
And the heart.
Give me woman above morals—
Not without,
Not beyond—
If her conduct breeds a doubt,
And she plays with bells and corals,
Fair and fond ;
With affection
And complexion
And red ripened lips that pout,
Who may lose the right direction
And yet win a resurrection
More devout.
But I want the woman whole,
In my adding,
Not mere padding
Or a body *minus* soul,
Not a peg
Just for jewels or the last
Fashion uglier than the past,
Unashamed to own a leg
And its adequate assertion,
Who can walk,
Who can talk
Of her faith or pet aversion ;
Fair and free

With reserve, no Pharisee
 Binding burdens
 Upon others, taking guerdons
 For herself and damning all
 Not as whitewashed or as small;
 Not a mimic of a man
 With his vices,
 With his dress and hair and clothes
 And his oaths
 And his follies—as she can,
 Yet despite the sacrifices
 Of her sex without one spark
 From his virtues in the dark.
 Give me woman fair and bright,
 Not afraid of Mrs. Grundy
 And her sour perpetual Sunday,
 Open to each pure delight
 In her proud and careless joy,
 The true article
 With no particle
 Of a Puritan alloy;
 Blown upon by all the breezes
 Of all sweet and healthy things,
 Treading dust and yet with wings—
 If she pleases;
 Grace her garb, and love her leaven,
 Meant for earth as well as Heaven.

VOX POPULI, VOX DEI.

I heard a voice, a feeble sigh
 At first it dimly came,
 That trembled from black deeps on high,
 With hiddden heart of flame;
 But what it meant no mortal knew,
 And cared no statesman then,
 Save that in tender bonds it drew
 The common hopes of men;

It wavered into silence soon
And nothing said more loud,
As passes over the full moon
A cloud.

And then it grew a murmur deep
That yearly gathered strength,
And wakened from his drunken sleep
The tyrant lord at length ;
It reached the gambler at his play
And sounded forth a knell
Where thousands for the sinful way
Their souls and honour sell ;
But still it struggling was and low
Though touched with troubled ire,
And smothered in a smouldering glow
Its fire.

And then it took a fairer form,
It borrowed from all parts,
The rapture of the rushing storm,
The love of royal hearts ;
The hope of each imperial mind
To mend each cruel wrong,
Was mingled with the sunset wind
And syllabled in song ;
The might of mountains calm and old,
The passion of work done,
It breathed a music manifold
But one.

And then it filled the prophet's mouth,
Of life the frozen stream
It stirred with breezes of the south,
No longer now a dream ;
The preacher caught its burning tones,
And darted as a brand
Among the palaces and thrones,
To purge the unclean land ;

Abroad in day from dungeon gloom
On eagle wings it flew,
It added force from martyrs' doom,
And grew.

And then it burst from bearded lips,
From serried ranks of men,
And with the shadow of eclipse
It shook the giant's den ;
A trumpet call, the clearer voice
Of brothers tried and true,
Who shaped in words the ages' voice
And asked the ages' due ;
Firm as the final speech of Fate,
That unto crownèd Ill
Utters in woe articulate
Its will.

And then the thought, that hardly spoke
At first in workshops dim,
A proud, tempestuous torrent broke
And overflowed its brim.
It seized the madness of all pain,
And moulded as a friend ;
And drew the earthquake in its train,
Yoked to its glorious end.
It joined the bitter pangs of dearth
To injury's fiercer leaven ;
And in the lightning wedded earth
With heaven.

And then hoar statesmen bowed the head
That long had turned away,
And paved a pathway for its tread
Triumphant from delay ;
They hearkened humbly to its tale,
To reason's grandeur grown,
Swept onward with the conquering gale,
And offered as their own ;

While gilded nobles bent the knee,
 Who reverence now would feign ;
 They swore the masses should be free,
 And reign.

Till, lo ! it mixed with mighty law,
 Not for a pampered class,
 And moved the Senate with its awe
 A broader scheme to pass ;
 It seemed the people's general voice,
 Marching in dauntless line
 When with one purpose they rejoice,
 And yet it was Divine.
 It daily waxed more swift and sweet,
 As labour lightlier trod,
 And fell in gladness at the feet
 Of God.

A DAUGHTER OF EARTH.

It was just at a rather hot corner
 In the City of Sin,
 Where the scum of the land and the scorner
 With his close-shaven chin,
 For a moment had met by a crossing
 In fine raiment and rags,
 And old Dives a penny was tossing
 To despair on the flags,
 When she flashed on my sight as a comet
 From the plenty and dearth—
 From the gems and the gutter's last vomit,
 A dear Daughter of Earth

Not a bit like *your* beautiful daughter,
 My grand lady in lace,
 Who is led as a lamb to the slaughter
 In the banqueting place ;
 With the flowers and sacrifice fillet
 Over bosom and hair,

On the scent of some nobleman's billet
And a carriage and pair ;
Not a bit like the pet you must marry
To a title or till,
To mere Mammon or drunken Lord Harry
Who may settle your bill.

No, thank God, she was all naked Nature
In that nightmare of art,
From bare toes to the top of her stature,
In each movement and part—
In the turn of the head and the shoulder,
And the tresses' mad maze ;
And sham modesty hung down looked bolder,
By her frank open gaze ;
And the smooth placid parson, who smugly
Reined his virtue in tight,
And the over-dressed dame, stood out ugly
In that innocent sight.

There was grace in the tattered sweet vesture
Setting off her pure gold,
And the ease of the unstudied gesture
Was a thing to behold ;
As she swayed to some ecstasy simple,
Cooing low like a dove,
The brown cheeks breaking into a dimple
Of young laughter and love ;
There was grace in the plea for a copper
As requesting a right,
That in only a man were improper,
But from her seemed delight.

Ah, the sot at her elbow yet pallid
From the criminal cup,
And the wench in her infamy, rallied
Before *her* and rose up
To a healthier height, and grew better
For a moment or two,

And relaxed at her look the old fetter
Which they could not undo ;
And the rake who was reckless and idle,
Without law ever known,
As he gazed felt how blessèd a bridle
Were demands not his own.

And the boy, ready-witted and smacking
Of the primitive mire,
A rude jest quite forgot and was lacking
In the vulgar desire,
Open-mouthed, as he stared and nigh stumbled
In a constable's arms,
While he drank in her beauty and fumbled
For some tribute to charms,
Which aroused an undreamed of emotion
Coming home like a spur,
With the dim and half-savage devotion
Of a desolate cur.

Up and down rolled humanity's torrent,
And the sunlight it burned,
And the curse with its message abhorrent
To a blessing was turned,
At a glimpse of that face in its sweetness
As it rippled with joy,
Till each tatter and stain had a meetness
That no dust could destroy ;
And the coster, who passed with his barrow
Wide awake to good grit,
Dropt his pipe, and an impudent sparrow
On her shoulder alit.

To and fro went the multitude tramping
Unto evil or good,
With the babble of babies and stamping
Of the horses that stood,
With the rattle of harness and thunder
Of re-echoing wheels,

Where the crowd for a space burst asunder
From pursuit at their heels ;
In the hubbub and haste she yet lingered,
Though she hardly knew why,
And a red rose in petulance fingered
Glancing up at the sky.

And a masterless dog, that had wrestled
With policemen and pride,
Caught her eye in its anguish and nestled
In content at her side ;
While she stroked it and gave to its needing
The remains of her crust,
And then staunched with her brown hand the bleeding
From some Christian thrust ;
Till it gazed up in gratitude, wagging
The poor tail all bemired,
And recalled the old energy flagging
With one sob, and expired.

Then she knelt down and kissed it, and smiling
Through her beautiful tears
Laid her blossom, with touches beguiling,
On the frame beyond fears ;
And she muttered a prayer of pity,
For the victim of might,
That went up from the sin of the City
Like an arrow of light,
To the Father of all, who, on Fashion
And its lusts looking down,
Wears as brightest the jewel compassion
In His glorious crown.

Oh ! my heart and my pocket grew wider
And I opened my arms,
While she spun around *me* like a spider
Her invincible charms ;

And I wanted one hug, but I dared not
 With the parson's prim face,
 And the prude in her plenty who spared not—
 As if gifts were disgrace ;
 Though I gave of my gold and the honour
 I reserve for the best,
 That I would to a Queen or Madonna
 In virginity drest.

Yes, she thanked me, and not as a beggar
 With a dolorous whine,
 With the grace of a Duff or McGregor
 And a gesture divine ;
 While a bell, like an echo of fiction
 Or from Paradise heard,
 Said " Amen " with a soft benediction
 To her musical word ;
 And she plunged in the tide with its clamour
 And its riches and dearth,
 In the glow of her innocent glamour,
 The dear Daughter of Earth.

TO A THEOSOPHIST.

Dost thou say, if I would choose and cherish
 All the Secret the Great Masters teach,
 I must break the dearest ties and perish
 To this world, ere I that summit reach ?
 I must tread alone the awful journey,
 With a black abyss on either hand,
 And engage in many a desperate tourney,
 Cheered by no glimpse of the Promised Land ?
 I must learn the dread last word of History
 Taught the *ego* by Creative Breath,
 And take heart to pluck the solemn mystery
 From the stern forbidding grasp of Death ?

Dost thou bid me brave with dauntless paces
The rough upward road that leads through Night,
Past the threatening arms and fiery faces
To some portal of some doubtful Light ?
Flee the plash of sweet and friendly fountains
And the joy of each familiar form,
For the iron crags of cold dark mountains
Wrestling ever with the flame and storm ?
Walk in silence, and embrace the sorrow
Set apart to be my ghastly bride,
For the shadow of a dim far morrow,
When my darlings long have left my side ?

Be it so, if that is what you offer,
I prefer my own small portion yet,
Ignorance and peace, an empty coffer,
To the treasures of the wise Thibet ;
To the unknown bliss of puppet fetters
Worked by Brothers who employ strange tools,
And precipitate ill-written letters
On the heads of weak deluded fools ;
Thunder-bolts, that out of this or that sky
Of the seven so dear to sages drop,
Manufactured by the bold Blavatsky
In her pet peculiar tea-cup shop.

Fain would I dare the worst leap initial
And for others clear my every shelf,
Ready for the act most sacrificial,
But I want no Heaven all to myself ;
This is not the teaching of the Story
Told by God to prophets good and great,
Which pursues alone the path to Glory
And consigns the feeble to their fate ;
And if Heaven be purchased by the giving
Up of wife and children I love well,
And whate'er makes this life worth the living,
Then, theosophist, I will have hell.

JUDAS.

Once when I had a humble friend,
I thought it no impiety
To let him just a bit ascend
And hover near Society ;
I opened wide to him my doors
And heart, that he might enter,
Though he seemed used to kitchen floors
And was a dear Dissenter ;
I welcomed him to half my kin,
Two parsons and one writer,
In hopes his dirty Æthiop skin
Would turn a little whiter.

He ate my mutton, drank my wine,
And traded without question
Upon my name, and like his swine
Enjoyed a good digestion ;
He talked of oxen and of roots,
Of farming stock and stable,
And wiped his wondrous muddy boots
Beneath my suffering table ;
I tried to make his rustic mind
Polished as my mahogany,
And bade him change his preference blind
Of cattle for cosmogony.

I deemed his manners soon would mend
And take a saving lustre,
Though they might sometimes from a friend
Require a casual duster ;
I threw a veil o'er broken plates
Or grammar innovations,
His havoc among aspirates
And awful aspirations ;
I rubbed him free from vulgar mire,
As well as I was able,
And warmed him at my social fire
Regardless of the fable.

Till bloated with his pride and lands,
Though I had paid the piper,
Fresh from the clasp of kindly hands
He proved a very viper ;
He showed he had a Judas mind,
The passions of a pander,
And stabbed me in the back behind
With poisoned blade of slander ;
Now I commend him to his gigs,
His shame and bad divinity,
And see him growing like his pigs
In foul and coarse affinity.

THE CRY OF LABOUR.

The land is ours by right of suffering years,
The centuries of toil,
Through which we sowed our sweat and bitter tears
Into the grave-like soil ;
For we have purchased it with blood and pain,
That endless weary strife,
Which was to grinding landlords only gain,
And cost us very life.

Yes, it is ours, who are prepared to strike
For statutes bright and new,
The gift of equal Heaven to all alike,
And not a grasping few ;
Ours as the sunshine and the rain and air,
With that sweet common trust,
Which makes the meanest future large and fair,
And raises men from dust.

It shall be free, no heritage of drones
Who on our winnings prey,
And pave with myriads of our martyr bones
Their idle careless way ;

It shall be ours, who only break the sod
To bury those that till,
If yet the people's is the voice of God,
Who works a nation's will.

The rule is ours, that now has passed away
From leaders base and blind,
The sweeter surer from its long delay,
And richer for mankind ;
The power has settled down on us at length,
By ages taught to reign,
And grown to ripeness of the stately strength,
Which monarchs only feign.

Authority has armed with iron hand,
And in its thunder clothed
The breast that now is fitted for command,
To freedom's heart betrothed ;
We have the might, the majesty of Law
Is at our sovereign claim,
And will the dreadful blade of justice draw
With no uncertain aim.

We know the Right, through nameless wrong secured,
Is our one true defence,
And suffering that has conquered and endured
Is like Omnipotence ;
And, lo ! we rise and in our millions call
From muddy court and street,
And bid the gorged and gilded spoilers fall
Discrownèd at our feet.

SECTION VII.

PRO PATRIÂ.

PAX BRITANNICA.

O brave men of this British land,
Who loyal are and true,
Born to the habit of command
And an imperial due—
The spoil of ancestors, that fought
And filled a gallant stage,
And wrung from larger deeds and thought
A glorious heritage ;
Who flash your edicts far and near,
Swift as the lightning flame,
And bare the sword that tyrants fear
Of the great British name,
And find an hospitable roof
Beneath the Arctic sky,
Nor from the furnace stand aloof
And make the storm ally,
And everywhere with all at home
On earth or tossing waves,
If under Egypt's fiery dome
Or by our Indian graves—
Accustomed yet to be obeyed,
Speak, till the discord cease,
Words of which despots are afraid,
“ *Let there be Peace* ”.

Ye good men of this ancient realm,
Who hear the sufferer's pleas,
And ride with justice at your helm
A hundred surging seas,
And carry terror unto knaves
On schemes of rapine bent,
And to down-trodden dying slaves
Your own enfranchisement ;
Your ships are many, and your arm
With thunder clothed is strong,
Still to beat back the crushing harm
And right the dastard wrong ;
Your will is law, your sentence yet
Is wide as your repute,
And though the evil fume and fret
They dare not this dispute ;
Your mercy is a fortress free
For all who ill endure,
Wherein the worn and wounded see
A sanctuary sure ;
Ah ! by the brightness of your flag
Without a blot or crease,
In thunder shout from every crag,
 " Let there be Peace ".

O stout men of historic fights
On crimson field or flood,
Who sealed with scars these famous rights
And purchased with your blood ;
Say, is it time the ravening reign
Of armed force should end,
And lives that love of Christians feign
To fairer service bend ?
Your navies girdle round the globe
And bring the better time,
And on your empire's royal robe
Are pearls from every clime ;

Your soldiers with the hero's heart
 Form the old fearless ring ;
 And each must play a noble part
 As though himself a king ;
 The cause is good and cannot fail,
 Your iron walls are strong,
 And truth shall evermore prevail
 Above the brutal wrong ;
 The ocean with your fleets patrol,
 A new and longer lease
 Of golden years at length unroll ;
 " Let there be Peace."

A SONG OF THE UNION.

One are we—but one nation
 By *fiat* of creation,
 And truly one at heart ;
 One by the act of moulding,
 Our title deeds of holding,
 That bade this Union start ;
 One in the hour of danger,
 Against the storm or stranger
 And every hostile art ;
What God hath joined together
By sea or silver tether,
 Shall man presume to part ?

One are we by a marriage,
 Which only foes disparage,
 And millions will defend ;
 One by that sacred leaven,
 The law that came from Heaven,
 Whereby two races blend ;
 One by dear Nature's token,
 The covenant unbroken,
 Our bulwark to the end ;

*What God hath joined together,
To brave all winds and weather,
Shall man presume to rend ?*

One are we in aspiring,
By gallant aims untiring,
 Enfranchisements of toil ;
One by our grand endeavour,
To carry far and ever
 The lamp of holy oil ;
One in our love of duty,
That heritage of beauty
 Which traitors may not soil ;
*What God hath joined together,
As eagle wing and feather,
Shall man presume to spoil ?*

One are we by our story,
And in the common glory
 We suffered much to make ;
One in the stern red battle,
And where the bullets rattle
 That cannot Union shake ;
One on the Senate benches,
As in the bloody trenches,
 With kindred needs at stake ;
*What God hath joined together
As rose and Scottish heather,
Shall man presume to break ?*

THE LAST OF THE TORIES.

I stand alone of all that elder race,
Who scorned the dirty bribes of power and place
And turned no coats to suit a traitor's nod—
Who served themselves but when they served their God,
And fatherland, and Queen, nor dared to sell
Their souls for sops and a division-bell.

All now are gone, and happy in the fact,
 To see not this great Empire by an act
 Of unveiled treason, like a beggar's clout
 Dropt, and its old magnificence snuffed out,
 As one might snuff the candle of a day;
 While over its dead glory gamblers play
 And bless their luck, and curse the evil chance
 That ever raised such splendid circumstance
 On such foundations. Through the palace prowl
 Unclean and furtive shapes, as bat and owl
 Haunt solitary nooks and hug the shade,
 Among the damnèd ruins they have made.
 And honour too is gone with principle,
 That were our bulwarks and ineffable
 Grandeur and grace. And nothing now is left
 But loud dishonour and the thumb of theft.
 Fools outlie fools, and class has war with class;
 The royal robes hang on a jewelled Ass;
 Pawned is the Crown; dust is upon the Throne;
 And I beside them weep and watch alone.

THE ROAD TO RUIN.

Where is the courage that stept out
 On freedom's suffering side,
 And shaped from many a battle shout
 The charters of our pride?

The rulers of the land are reeds,
 And swayed by every gust
 For dirty place or party needs
 Betray their sacred trust.

They walk not in the goodly ways
 Our fathers loved to tread,
 When honour for heroic days
 A track of glory spread.

They turn not from their small content
To dare imperial acts,
Or mould a mighty government,
Built up on iron facts.

They look not forward to the age
When nations wake from sleep,
Beyond the gaslight of the stage
Whereon they twist and creep.

The bulwarks of our kingdom reel
Beneath the felon stroke,
And at the stab of guardian steel
Goes down the centuried oak.

The beacons of our creeds are gone,
And doubt with shifting wraith
Is throned where once in thunder shone
The fortress of our faith.

Our watchmen slumber at their post,
And open wide the gate
Regardless of the hostile host,
That fools may legislate.

Shall we be led by solemn cheats
Who dupe with dazzling lies,
And sell for gain or sordid seats
Our grand old liberties ?

Nay, we will follow landmarks true
That keep a broader ken,
And pay a people's homage due
To measures, not to men.

We take our stand on ancient rights
That wrought our country's fame,
And yet will last, when meteor lights
Have veiled their scarlet shame.

Ours is a history, wrung from strife
 On field and tossing flood
 By warriors careless of their life,
 And written in their blood.

And we will hand that freedom down
 Which made our Britain great,
 The brightest jewel of our Crown,
 The buttress of our State.

AN EPITHALAMIUM.

(6th July, 1893.)

Hail to the life that closes,
 Hail to the life that starts ;
 Come, strew a path of roses,
 For these young Royal hearts.
 In Heaven it was appointed,
 On earth it is decreed,
 That these by Love anointed
 Should be made one indeed.
 Come, tell it out in story,
 To our remotest kin ;
 Throw wide the gates of glory,
 That Love may enter in,
 There was a time of sadness,
 There was a time for fears,
 But now the dawn of gladness
 Has smiled away the tears.
 The winds and storms are over,
 The land has honeyed rest,
 And to the bee the clover
 Gives up its bleeding breast.
 Gone are the April shadows,
 Gone is the April day,
 The sun is on the meadows,
 And all the world is May.
 Ring lowly,
 Ring slowly,

And let the message sink and rest,
Deep in the sanctuaried breast ;
For Love is sacred, Love is solemn,
And soaring up to God in praise,
Like some pure white cathedral column,
Or simple songs that children raise.
 Ring loudly,
 Ring proudly,
For ye will never fling so wide
Your blessing for a fairer bride ;
O all ye bells of every steeple,
That hang betwixt the Heaven and us
And now proclaim a happy people,
Ye minister as angels thus.
 Ring gladly,
 Ring madly,
And send the Bridegroom with the sounds
Our blessing to earth's farthest bounds ;
Though wall and buttress with the thunder
Of your great passion rock and reel,
That bursts the bars of Space asunder,
Till all the same sweet madness feel.
 Ring ever,
 Or never
Upon the wind that wafts your strain,
Ring out the wedding peal again ;
O ring it down the generations
For them and brighter broader parts ;
To keep with rich reverberations
The wedding music in their hearts.
 O happy hour
 Of happier token,
That bursts in flower
And bliss unspoken ;
Say, who can find a worthier rest,
In all the raptures
Of Love's captures,
Than on our Sailor Prince's breast ?

Come, we will fill their cup with sweetness,
 And let no English greeting fail
 To spread the splendour of completeness,
 And so again we bid them Hail.
 With garland and with carol,
 In holiday apparel,

 We yield them honoured place,
 Saluting them with plaudit
 Down to the final Audit—

 The hope of England's race.
 And let ten thousand battle voices
 From our unbroken iron wall,
 Show how a mighty realm rejoices
 And echo back one nation's call.
 The sea that is our world-wide vassel
 Roars welcome from its myriad waves,
 The banner with its bloody tassel
 Lifts up the song of rescued slaves.
 From sombre pinewoods and the billows
 That beat on Australasian sands,
 Where dusky maids on golden pillows
 Start from their dreams at stranger hands,
 From desert wild with thorn and thistle
 And icebergs as they plough their track,
 And outposts where our bayonets bristle
 To hold the Russian spoiler back,
 From East and West and South and Nor'land
 Where monsters wallow in the deep,
 From basking creek and breezy foreland
 And bowers of immemorial sleep,
 Goes up one universal chorus,
 From isles and legendary Ind,
 That now their welcomes blend sonorous
 With every waft of every wind;
 And all the tongues of all the nations,
 Men of each colour and each creed,
 Unite for Them their acclamations,
 And like the ocean shout God speed.

Come, strew a path of lilies,
 For this young Royal Pair.
 Now March and daffodillies
 Are gone with winter air.
 The Bride is pure and pleasant
 The Bridegroom is our best,
 The gladness of the present
 Brings in an era blest.
 Horizons new are lifting
 Beyond this fevered strife,
 And rosy Dawn comes rifting
 The clouds with larger life.
 The eve has linked a message
 Of love to laughing leas,
 And morn a hopeful presage
 Sends down on sunny seas.
 The heaven from its blue bosom
 Pours forth the brightest ray,
 The earth is but one blossom,
 And all the world is May.

HOW TO DIE.

If she must go, great England in her flower,
 And sink at last to littleness and shame,
 Then let her fighting fall by hostile power,
 Not stabbed by friends that spit upon her fame.

Let not the children, who upon her breast
 Have hung and gathered food and waxen strong,
 Now turn and rend the Mother who gave rest
 And life to be paid back in dastard wrong.

O in her hour of need shall England find
 Her danger in her own divided land,
 And in her grandeur basely struck behind
 Die by the treachery of a trusted hand?

Is none left loyal now? Does no one prize
The glory that her heroes bought with blood,
Who made all lands her costly merchandise
And stamped their iron law on field and flood?

And must her greatness wither as the reed,
Or be the sport of every wind of chance?
And must her shopmen's pettifogging greed
Sell in the mart our old inheritance?

Ah! better were at once some noble death
Wrought by the mercy of the knightly steel,
Than to be flattered by the garlic breath
Of perjured patriots whining at her heel.

Let her not live to be a party's tool
In any sordid service lightly prest,
A butt at which the careless passing fool
May fling the unavenged and idle jest.

Once nations quailed at her forbidding brow
That bade their angry strife or murmur cease,
Her sword was sharp, her banner bright, that now
Are byewords both in Europe's armed peace.

Her feet bestrode the earth she ruled to bless
With broader justice, and her pilgrims bold
Gave a new world its being to redress
The unequal power and balance of the old.

Where are the leaders? Friends and foes are one
On her white honour to impress the brand,
And her own guardians' labour has undone
The ancient bases of their fatherland.

PRO ARIS ET FOCIS.

Close up by the bright Banner,
That round the rolling world
In the same fearless manner
Is as of old unfurl'd;

Held by our fighting fathers,
As now young valour holds,
Which slave and exile gathers
Beneath its guardian folds ;
A refuge from the tyrant,
To which the helpless flee,
A hope for each aspirant,
The fortress of the free.

Our empire is in danger,
That union dear to all,
The coward and the stranger
Are striving for its fall ;
This land, earth's one white blossom
Is darkened in mid day,
The sons that sucked her bosom
Have traitors turned and slay ;
The flag that centuries guided,
Shall it be basely torn ?
Must Britain be divided,
And left an empty scorn ?

By sufferings long and cruel,
Through vigils and red fights,
We won that precious jewel—
The vantage of our rights ;
'Twas wrung from ills abolished,
For children and for wives,
In the fierce furnace polished
And sealed with sacred lives ;
And shall we tamely barter
The bulwark of our State,
Its fair and famous charter
That makes our Britain Great ?

No more with treason dally,
To England's name be just,
And in your thousands rally
Around our solemn trust ;

Oh ! by the blood-bought stages
That built this glorious power,
Let not the work of ages
Be blasted in an hour ;
Hold tight the bond of nations,
The pledge of peaceful earth,
The old and tried foundations
Of altar and of hearth.

HOW I WON THE VICTORIA CROSS.

Come fetch me bit and bridle,
Come saddle me the mare,
Black Bess will not be idle,
And must the peril share ;
The blood of Arab rangers
Is hers, she cannot fear,
And still the note of dangers
Is music to her ear ;
Like sudden sunrise breaking
On a dim desert space,
In her young heart is waking
The passion of her race ;
Her nostrils ope and quiver,
Her haunches fret and strain,
She scents the tossing river
And the damned leaden rain ;
Her small proud head she raises
To seek the foe afar,
And on her forehead blazes
The one white beacon star ;
Ah ! let me draw it tighter,
The girth must never slip,
And rub the sabre brighter
To redden in my grip ;
Black Bess is wild for going,
And I shall sooner tire,
And all her frame is glowing
Like an incarnate fire.

Come, wrap the Colours round me,
Our bulwark and our pride,
'Twere well that they enwound me,
Should death become my bride;
That Flag I followed early,
Sole armour for a man,
Which in the hurly-burly
Flashed ever in the van;
No robe however royal
Were better garb to wear,
For one who would be loyal
And the old fame upbear;
Is Space about me rifted?
Are thousands near me prest?
I feel as though I lifted
An empire on my breast;
Is it a madman's crazing?
The shadows rise and flee,
As if the world were gazing
And every eye on me;
Come, mount, I may not tarry,
This is no common vow,
But first Black Bess must carry
A kiss upon her brow;
For England and for duty
And darlings I love well,
She goes in all her beauty
Into the jaws of hell.

Not for true love's sweet story,
Not for a Prince's power,
Would I exchange the glory
Of this one gallant hour;
'Tis rank enough to rough it,
Not for the longest life
Would I abate a buffet
In this unequal strife;
Before me spreads the splendour

Of an immortal deed,
And God is my Defender
Who knows a nation's need ;
Behind me ring the voices
Of comrades' cheering cry,
The plaudit that rejoices
A soul in agony ;
Around me bullets whistle,
Below me stare the dead,
And gory lances bristle,
But Heaven is overhead ;
Black Bess is bravely flying,
She loves the fiery test,
And who could dream of dying
In this imperial vest ?
The battle rage is on her,
The spirit nought can bend,
If it be death or honour
'Twill be a soldier's end.

I sit upon my saddle,
A king upon a throne,
And pools of blood bestraddle
In awful joy alone ;
No thought of asking quarter,
The fever of the fight—
The savage thirst of slaughter
Burns in me its delight ;
Hurrah for cuts and killing,
For parry and for thrust,
Black Bess is wild and willing
And spatters brains in dust !
Down go the dusky devils,
Up comes the sabre right,
There will be cursèd revels
In hottest hell to-night !
Who cares for wounds or losses,
Before that grim black line,

When close the river tosses
 Its waters as they shine?
What are the stabbing lances
 Or the more piercing yell,
The shot that stings and glances
 To duty's guardian spell?
They shall not take me living,
 Although they clamour loud,
No grave clothes of their giving,
 I have a fairer shroud.

The lust that has no laying
 Has crimsoned me with gore,
For slaying, slaying, slaying,
 Till I can slay no more;
The wall of flame is scattered,
 The sooty demons reel,
Black Bess their pride has shattered
 Beneath her iron heel;
I feel the ancient Viking
 All blazing in my blood,
The hungry wrath for striking
 Through fiercest fire or flood;
Why, 'tis a game for Princes,
 With sword and belching gun,
That the stout heart evinces,
 When those poor vermin run;
My steed her head has lowered
 Prepared for worse than that,
To seize yon creeping coward
 And shake him like a rat;
His stroke has lost its labour,
 The swarthy visage pales,
As through him shears my sabre,
 And dead men tell no tales;
What, faint? Think not of falling
 So near the dazzling goal,
With England's honour calling,
 And here the waters roll.

Come, in we plunge, while volley
The rebel curses round,
And at the godlike folly
In baffled hate resound ;
Come, swim for love and glory,
And thousands dead that lie,
So that our stirring story
Shall never, never die ;
Oh ! the new life that rushes
Through every bursting vein,
And with its healing brushes
Away each maddening pain !
The strength as of a giant
Inflames my weary arms,
As I look back defiant
And mock the vanquished harms ;
But one is gashed and broken
And hardly holds the reins,
And yet it bears the token
Of ruddy splendid stains ;
Black Bess is sorely stricken,
If still her head is high,
And sad her sobbings quicken,
Though refuge now is nigh ;
But cruel are the surges,
And angry is the wind
That beats my face with scourges,
And dark is death behind.

Ah ! if my God would will it
And we might struggle thro',
The bullet with its billet
Would then no mischief do !
I ask Him for no guerdon,
But only beg to spare
Black Bess who bears the burden,
My gallant glorious mare ;
But, hark ! the shots are singing

Like hailstones round my head,
And far-off bells seem ringing
The requiem of the dead ;
If I could clear the river,
Then welcome were the ball,
Did I my tale deliver
Right gladly would I fall.
Great Heavens, the blow has lighted
Upon its prey at last,
Just with the harbour sighted
From the hot iron blast !
But now I *will* not perish,
No failure can be mine,
While I the Colours cherish
That give me strength Divine ;
On, on, at duty's guiding,
For kingdoms on me lean,
And God with me is riding
For country and for Queen.

Before me swims the distance,
The waters dance and foam,
But none can give assistance,
And still unreached is home ;
My senses reel and rally,
I bite my parching lips,
And visions gleam and dally
With one in dread eclipse ;
I see the Highland mountains,
The cradle of my birth,
And the long leap of fountains
That burst their granite girth ;
I hear the eagle calling
High in his cosmic sweep,
And like a meteor falling
Into the sunless deep ;
The thousand leagues have vanished,
Earth's giant barriers bow,

And faces bright and banished
Come pressing nigh me now ;
And one in fair white clothing
Steps through the tumult down,
Who yields her hand's betrothing
And in her hand a crown ;
But yet the battle rages,
My purpose sets like stone,
As if the pride of ages
Rests upon me alone.

Oh ! by the crimson laurels
Of many a famous field,
Like brands from fiery quarrels,
We cannot, dare not yield !
By the grand Flag, that faces
All quarters of the deep,
And the whole world embraces
In its majestic sweep !
That under its broad pinions
Gives slaves their freedom yet,
The Flag on whose dominions
The sun can never set !
By England's maids and mothers
Who hang upon our deeds,
With love that vainly smothers
The sob for bitter needs !
Who watch with wan devotion
These tempest-ridden lands,
And seem across the ocean
To stretch their praying hands !
By all most sweet and solemn
In our great annals read,
And by the sacred column
That guards the warrior dead !
We will not fail the anguish
Of those with weeping blind,
And brothers left to languish
In awful straits behind.

Come, comrade, just one struggle
And mastered is the shore,
And those black fiends shall juggle
With England's might no more ;
Remember outraged woman,
The child with dabbled hair,
The crimes that were not human,
And mocked at dumb despair !
Remember the pale prison
And letters scrawled in gore,
The cry from graves uprisen,
The well at grim Cawnpore !
Remember the word broken,
Red ribands and red shoes,
Pierced frocks with the same token,
And then we cannot lose !
Think of the blessed meeting,
The prize within our grasp,
The rapturous look and greeting,
And the warm loving clasp !
Think of the joy and shelter,
The bugle's welcome call,
The peace beyond this welter,
The bayonets' safe wall !
Black Bess, these balls are trifles
Now succour is at hand—
The glint upon the rifles
Of our brave English band.

Hurrah for the dear haven,
Hurrah for triumph won
From rebels crushed and craven,
Hurrah for duty done !
We stop, at length, all bleeding,
Half blinded, worn and wet,
To send the avengers speeding
In time for rescue yet ;
They stay our headlong paces

With smile or anxious frown,
 On soldiers' furrowed faces
 The iron tears roll down ;
 They weep, laugh, talk, assemble,
 From scarred and bearded lips
 That whiten as they tremble
 The prayer or cursing slips.
 But, though such death is glorious
 With honour at its side,
 Black Bess has fallen victorious
 In her last stately stride ;
 In sad and solemn manner
 We gather where she fell,
 And on her lay the banner
 She died to save so well.
 Alas, that fate should sever
 The life it cannot kill !
 But she shall ride for ever
 Through England's story still.

BLOOD AND IRON.

What built England great ?
 Gamblers' luck or prate—
 Party babble ?
 Sops like Honour thrown
 As a crust or bone
 To the rabble ?
 Fighting but for power
 Or the victor's hour
 And his chariot,
 Bought at dreadful cost,
 Soul and country lost,
 With Iscariot ?
 Tarnishing old fame
 With the sordid shame
 Of a ragman,
 Tumbling Empire hot

In the melting pot
 For some bagman?
 Tyranny's red whips,
 Or the redder lips
 Of some Siren?—
 England slowly rose
 Out of thunder throes,
 Blood and iron.

What made England great?
 Licking others' plate,
 Dirty dishes?
 Picking up the scraps
 Tost from richer laps
 And brave wishes?
 Fouling her own nest,
 With the open pest
 Of loud haters,
 Who her ruin spread
 Eating of her bread,
 Unhung traitors?
 Hawking up and down
 Church itself and Crown
 In the gutter,
 But to fatten more
 All the knaves that store
 Stolen butter?
 Was it Shakespeare's name
 Handing his bright fame
 Down to Byron?
 These alone were *nil*,
 With no bigger bill—
 Blood and iron.

What built England great?
 Grandeur in her hate
 Of dishonour,
 Which made Principle

Fair and terrible
Her Madonna ;
Scorn of coward acts,
Loyalty to pacts
If once spoken,
And the plighted word
Like her awful sword
Never broken ;
Love of lofty ends,
Jealousy for friends
Wronged or strangers,
And her charters' trust
Wrung through glorious dust
From dread dangers ;
Heritage of deeds
Better than all creeds,
Which environ
Our White Island Rose
In her sure repose—
Blood and iron.

SECTION VIII.

LAUGHING PHILOSOPHY.

IPSE DIXIT.

I deemed it rather hard, to think
A serpent so could chatter,
And once like Huxley used to wink
At many a Bible matter ;
I puzzled over sacred lines,
And started issues foxy—
If donkeys might be sound divines
Or cows love orthodoxy ;
How every creature great and small
The tiny Ark could enter,
And like good churchmen come at call
Without one d—d Dissenter ;
Why rolling sun and moon should stay
Stock still for any mortal,
And death to the most holy hand
Unlock its iron portal.
But the *Magister* then looked in,
Lest Science Truth should weaken,
And I knew it were deadly sin
To doubt the Great Archdeacon ;
He bade me hold the ancient faith
And not with error mix it,
While hurling at *Lux Mundi's* wraith
His dauntless "*Ipse Dixit*".

Lo ! Reason all away refines,
And our last educator
Devours the toughest of divines
Sauced with some commentator ;
And German critics none agree
With us or with each other,
While Tweedledum cuffs Tweedledee,
And flea bites flea his brother ;
And doctors quarrel with the text
Or steal the fire from Blazes,
To be knocked over by the next
Who hold yet wilder crazes.
And so I argue it were well
To stay by steady landmarks,
When in an hour the ocean swell
Sweeps over idle sandmarks ;
To anchor on the Ancient Rock
That bears the brunt of ages,
And will outlast the puny shock
Of pettifogging sages ;
To leave distortion's dirty plate
The dogmatist who licks it,
And wait till opening of the Gate
The final "*Ipse Dixit*".

And now what would I not believe,
In spite of the majority
And sophists who their dupes deceive,
When backed by good authority ?
And if the mighty Mistress Caird,
Whose Christian name is Mona,
Should vow, with Bishop Huxley paired,
No whale could swallow Jonah ;
Yet I, led by no pretty nose,
Would the Archdeacon follow,
And think that Jonah if he chose
The whale itself could swallow ;
And I could swallow both with ease

Nor trouble at a question,
Should but the grand old Scripture please,
And have no indigestion.
Once I with learning used to nod,
And guilty was of treason
Against my better self and God,
When tost about by Reason ;
But now I let each quibble be,
Or scholars leave to fix it,
While finding quite enough for me
God's glorious "*Ipse Dixit*".

THE PORTER AT THE GATE.

Sat as always good St. Peter
At the Heavenly gate,
Early hours and late,
Though his language scarce was sweeter
Nor his conduct now discreeter
Than in mortal state ;
For it was such weary work,
Infidel, and Jew, and Turk,
Sure to spoil his honest napping,
Just as he began to snore,
And with noisy fingers rapping,
That he sometimes swore.

Up they jostled without number,
Piebald souls and white,
Brown and sooty quite,
Stuffed with stupid creeds and lumber,
Wide awake and some in slumber,
Majesty and mite ;
In a motley crowd they came,
Deaf and withered, blind and lame,
Evermore the entrance blocking,
With their scraps of Scriptural tags,
Or with ceremonies knocking,
Clothed in ritual rags.

Came a Churchman, though with quaking
Heart he slowly went,
In his Prayer-book pent,
Doubtful of St. Peter waking,
Trusting in his doomed and shaking
Old Establishment ;
Yet with swagger proud and bold,
On his rubrics laying hold ;
But with patience waxing shorter
Or an earthly touch of gout,
The disturbed and drowsy Porter
Shut the Churchman out.

Came a Fool of Forms, disguising
Errors dark in dress,
Raising as to bless
Holy hands in ways surprising,
Ever attitudinising
His mock righteousness ;
Great at small religious tricks,
Millinery, candlesticks,
Pious pose, the east direction ;
But St. Peter, with a flout,
Sick of all his genuflection,
Shut the Formist out.

Came a Broad Churchman, with fancies
Culled from every store,
Dross and little ore,
Not averse to plays and dances
And the very last romances
Spun by German lore ;
Eager to explain away
Hell and all its black array,
And each text that was not pleasant
Or made erring beauties pout ;
But St. Peter, for the present,
Shut the babbler out.

Came a Low Churchman, who cuddled
On defiant arm,
As a holy charm,
His big Bible, mixed and muddled
With mad views, by visions fuddled
Braying loud alarm ;
Sure his soundness ought to win
Heaven and all the bliss therein,
With his muzzle mean and foxy ;
But, though *he* might never doubt,
Peter, tired of orthodoxy,
Shut the driveller out.

Came the author of that beacon
Lighting to the shoals
Lost and silly souls,
Seeking still a Church to weaken,
Though in fear of the Archdeacon
With his burning coals ;
Breaking grand old faiths and straws,
Splitting hairs, and bearding laws—
God and even Mrs. Grundy,
Like a pig's uprooting snout ;
But the saint (alas "*Lux Mundi*" !)
Shut the casuist out.

Came a Calvinist, with ration
Short for hungry need,
Fruit of bloody seed,
Hugging as his own salvation
Good news of the world's damnation,
With his Devil's creed ;
Hoping it might be his turn,
Now to see by millions burn
Heretics in their own gravy ;
But St. Peter, with a clout,
Ere he could exclaim "*Peccavi*,"
Shut the murderer out.

Came a man of milk and water,
Moderate and bland,
Holding well in hand
Virgin views like Jephthah's daughter,
Frisking innocent to slaughter,
For the butcher's brand ;
Peeping here and there for aid,
And of novel creeds afraid,
As of all things strong and manly ;
But, a friend of doctrine stout,
Peter, not too hard on Stanley,
Shut the shambler out.

Came a so-called Independent,
Boasting none but he
Was from fetters free,
Yet, with poverty ascendant,
Quite the Devil's own defendant,
On a beggar's knee ;
Preaching still to pew and purse,
Fearful of the rich men's curse,
Any trash or pious error,
That might profit for a bout ;
But the Saint, to point his terror,
Shut the trimmer out.

Came a whining old Wesleyan,
In the gravest pose,
Singing through his nose
Hymns that please the breast plebeian,
Though with leavening Sadducean,
Of the Judgment close ;
Not disliking practice sharp,
If atoned on David's harp,
Clinging to his tea and hassocks
And the canting ranting rout ;
But the Saint, preferring cassocks,,
Shut the brawler out.

Came a Baptist bold, as rocket
 Ready to ascend,
 For a glorious end,
 One hand with his party docket,
 And the other in the pocket
 Of his dearest friend ;
 Marching on, by devious tricks,
 Through the dirt of Politics,
 Right away to bliss and glory,
 With the latest sham and shout ;
 But St. Peter knew his story,
Shut the viper out.

Still they came at every season,
 Faded souls and fat,
 With their passports pat,
 Quite forgetting lives of treason
 And without a rag of reason
 Save the lifted hat ; *
 High and humble, rich and poor,
 Knocking at the Heavenly door,
 Some with meekness, some with unction,
 Here a lion, there a lout,
 But the Saint, with no compunction,
Shut the humbugs out.

Vainly did he ask the ticket
 Which would welcome all,
 After any fall,
 Cursed theology's dark thicket,
 As he nodded at the wicket,
 Wanting Christ not Paul ;
 Each came labelled like a bale,
 With denomination's tale,

* A poor man on his death-bed assured his clergyman he felt sure of heaven, because he never entered a church without raising his hat.

One from church and one from chapel,
 Running like a leaky spout ;
 But the Saint, who smelled the apple,
Shut the Insects out.

Then, in hope to get some quittance
 From the constant strokes,
 Now no longer jokes,
 Seeking rest—if one hour's pittance,
 Peter wrote up, "*No admittance*
But for business folks" ;
 Yet they only prest him more,
 "Christians" self-styled by the score,
 Till, though in the act of sleeping,
 He resolved such dregs to scout,
 Seized a broom and rudely sweeping
Shut the rubbish out.

Came, at last, a child the winner
 Of no earthly meed,
 Starved, without a creed
 Save that angels must have dinner,
 Sighing, "I am just a sinner,
 Who the Saviour need" !
 Though she knocked with trembling touch,
 Hoping little, fearing much,
 Yet all Heaven to its far centre
 Shook, and Peter owning kin,
 Though she was a d—d Dissenter,
Shut the beggar in.

ST. COLMAN'S GIRDLE.

St. Colman, as he breathed the spice
 And honey-dews of Paradise,
 Grew troubled in his resting ;
 For rumours reached him even there

Of dreadful doings everywhere,
The wicked world infesting ;
Deceptions wreaked on poor Papa
Touched him on Abraham's Bosom,
And turned to thorns the blossom ;
While Princes played at baccarat
With fools who left the door ajar,
And did not use the besom.

He wondered, with a peevish tone,
They would not leave him yet alone
And bothered him by scandal ;
And why they vainly washed the dirt,
On damaged name and shady shirt,
By light of public candle ;
The dear ascetics were quite dead,
Who heaped the holy ashes
And penitential lashes
Upon the offending back and head,
And humbly walked with naked tread
And just their fig-leaf sashes.

And then he deeply sighed and drest,
A rose-leaf and a sunbeam vest
Were all he ever needed ;
Though now he took a piercing thorn,
Which on his pious breast was borne
And wayward fancies weeded ;
Again determined he to stoop—
Though drawn on felon's hurdle,
With blood that terrors curdle—
His neck to earth's old cramping loop,
The strife of knave and nincompoop,
And bring his precious Girdle.

And so he came with doubtful pace,
Armed only with that godly grace
Which is the best protection.

Resolved to test the awful tales
Of such adulterous aims and ales
By his own sure dissection ;
For, if the gossip heard was true,
And men lived but for pleasure
Or hoarding empty treasure,
While no one bravely did his due
Nor looked to Heaven for guiding clue,
He soon would take their measure.

Alas ! he found the earth had grown
No better, still with evil sown
In search of sweet variety—
The prudes and prophets were, at cards
And corners, keen as sporting Guards
Who moved in grand Society ;
He saw how Royalty had run
On high its colours gambling,
While judge and law went rambling,
And drew the curtain on the sun
Resolved to have a little fun,
With wild lieutenants scrambling.

He probed for honesty with pain
The loftiest place, and probed in vain,
For there it did not flourish ;
He sounded too the lowest deep,
Where outcasts cursing in their sleep
Sedition grimly nourish ;
He tried his Girdle in the State,
On losers and the winner,
Before and after dinner,
And only proved the golden mate
Was welcome at the golden gate—
It would not fit one sinner.

He sought for modesty in maids,
Who used all other artful aids,
And asked the wisest matron ;

But, though he hunted high and low,
At home and church and cattle show,
 It did not boast a patron ;
He saw now value it had not,
 When women liked joys risky
 Or smoked and smacked of whisky,
And no one minded a black spot,
Though tattle made it rather hot—
 The oldest were most frisky.

He tried his Girdle on the saint,
Who ogled behind pious paint
 The young and tender oyster,
And marked the morals of the camp—
Aye of the gutter bird or tramp,
 Were more than in the cloister ;
The Girdle could not clasp such dregs ;
 No jewel in the casket,
 However they might mask it,
Could he discover—only legs
And filthy facts, and rotten eggs
 All huddled in one basket.

Lo, up and down he weary went,
And in and out of Parliament,
 To prove the various Members ;
He traced no good in either House,
Whose mountain could not yield a mouse,
 But virtue in its embers ;
And though he still stept curious on,
 He only smelled rich pasty
 Or pleasures nice but nasty ;
For truth and purity were gone
From the great Modern Babylon,
 That toyed with pæderasty.

He entered then the Courts, where laws
Are weighed, and found them splitting straws
 And selling souls for money ;

He heard how wealthy sins were hushed
And hid, and all men madly rushed
For neighbours' pots of honey ;
The cases ever were the same,
Of sots and gamblers' courses
Or pretty girls and horses,
And rakes who played a losing game,
To burn their fingers in the flame
That lighted up divorces.

Although he knocked at every door,
And measured mighty souls and poor,
He gained no doubtful sentence ;
Decorum seemed as bad as vice,
And furious passions under ice,
Dreamed nowise of repentance ;
Illegal acts the judges blest,
And sealed with their authority
The gilded gay minority
If solvent, prim, and grandly drest,
While prisons and police opprest
The erring mean majority.

His Girdle would not suit a lass
In any lot of any class,
With or without a copper ;
The ugly kicked the traces off
And made of virtue but a scoff,
The pretty were not proper ;
Till peeping through that open pane,
Where honour never winces
At test that truth evinces,
He found at last the Royal Dane
For ever young and free from stain,
And left it with the Princess.

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME.

Scandal like that was never known,
Which records all defeated,
Like wild fire through the parish blown,
By every tongue repeated ;
The banner had its folds to furl,
Pigs carried tails quite out of curl,
And moped with prudes and purists ;
The busiest folks who plan and plot,
While they an hour their cares forgot,
Hobnobbed with sinecurists ;
Even schoolboys cried, with lips of jam,
" Cherchez la femme."

Someone had something dreadful wrought,
The rector too was in it,
The Bishop bent his solemn thought
Thereon for full a minute ;
The Bishop's wife, who drew from dukes
That awful frown, which with rebukes
Had routed many a curate,
Turned up her grand ancestral nose,
Assuming her most moral pose,
So proper and obdurate,
And murmured like the mighty Cham,
" Cherchez la femme."

The spinsters all were up in arms,
Who showed the azure stocking,
And hid in crystal homes their charms,
Declaring it was shocking ;
The beggar, who with beery wrath,
Called at the " public " on his path
And never put a shirt on,
Was nigh as angry (if with oaths)
As she who beamed in classic clothes,

The pretty girl from Girton,
Who sighed, "Though innocent I am,
"Cherchez la femme."

But whether it was that or this,
No gossips could make certain,
Who on the doubtful crime or kiss,
Pulled down the pious curtain ;
Though still it seemed a mischief dire,
To simple Hodge and bloated squire
Nose deep in "night-cap" jorum—
A sin that tattlers set agog,
Defenders of the Decalogue
And whitewash of Decorum ;
Each offered up his neighbour's lamb,
"Cherchez la femme."

"DIVINE SERVICE WILL BE PERFORMED," ETC

I.

The stage is ready and the curtain up,
And still the audience stand
Betwixt confession and the social cup
That waits the greedy hand ;
The scenery is all the very best
Their money can procure
And gay the garments which the priests invest
Fresh victims to allure ;
The great wax candles in their glory shine
Against which fools have stormed,
The play is perfect now, and so "Divine
Service will be performed".

2.

The actors polished are in every part
And know their business well,
The postures and impostures got by heart
Which of the workshop smell ;

The tricks and turns, the genuflexion show,
In ordered mummary made,
The movement and the meretricious glow
Of pious masquerade ;
The droning words, the dim religious light
That veils each doubtful fact,
The mumbling sounds that herald more than sight
The opening of the act.

3.

The play goes on to its appointed end
Through the well-studied dance
Of shifting shades, and symbols mightily lend
Reluctant circumstance ;
Here is a stir of clasping hands and feet
Hid in the newest gown,
With glimpse of downcast eyes divinely sweet
That crave the martyr's crown ;
And there the flash of fluctuating shapes
That never come too nigh,
While from red penitential lips escapes
The educated sigh.

4.

The points are duly taken as they rise,
Each in its proper place,
While rapture of a sad well-bred surprise
Sets off the priceless lace ;
The wine of worship fair devotion drinks,
Bright is the feast evolved,
The actors bow, and soft the curtain sinks
On sinners all absolved ;
And then they go to grace some other shrine
For worldly pastime warmed,
To err with greater zest, and thus Divine
Service has been *performed*.

GENERAL BOOM.

Who is this with awful pose
Sanitary nod and nose,
 Prodding, prying,
 Calling, crying,
Up and down the dirty street,
With the march of many feet,
 Down in every corner poking,
 Waif and stray and outcast stroking,
To the strains of fife and drum,
Right away to Kingdom Come,
 With a prophet's voice of doom ?
 General Boom.

Who this stoppage makes and stir,
Like the ancient mariner,
 Cursing, blessing,
 Feeding, dressing
All the Pariahs that go by,
Caught with his convicting eye,
 Sounding on his brazen trumpet
 Joyful news to thief and strumpet,
Ragged Bob and naughty Bet
Hauling to the Gospel net
 Cast out deep in ghostly gloom ?
 General Boom.

Who has everywhere his stand,
Lean and hungry, hat in hand,
 Praying, begging,
 Grinding, pegging
At the organ he can play
Beautifully night and day,
 For the welfare of the masses,
 Girt with Hallelujah Lasses,

Tambours, hymns of solemn tone,
 Set to tunes, the devil's own,
 In the highest, lowest room?
 General Boom.

Who is this that sternly sweeps
 To the dregs the vilest deeps,
 With a bluster
 And a duster
 For the vice whose ugly head
 Dares to brave his pious tread,
 Far and near his buffets dealing,
 On the drinking and the stealing,
 With a proper pat for each
 Sinner sent within his reach,
 Brushing on with glorious broom?
 General Boom.

A DROP OF RAIN.

The lordly squire stept from his mansion,
 A mighty man was he,
 And on his waistcoat's white expansion
 No soil could censor see;
 He bore a noble silk umbrella,
 It was his second best,
 Cursed the New Code and old Mundella
 For spoiling his night's rest;
 'Twas half-past ten, and from the minster
 The bells their warning sent,
 And hastened virtuous prude and spinster
 To prayers all penitent;
 He felt the pride of his position,
 And fingered his gold chain,
 Then turned and fled (as from perdition),
 A drop of rain.

"Dear John," the partner of his pickings,
 Cried to that legal soul,
 Who after many snake-like lickings
 Devoured his clients whole ;
 "Dear John, though sorely absolution
 I need for sinful talk,
 And much my fragile constitution
 Requires a daily walk ;
 Though Lady Sarah's Paris bonnet
 I dying am to see—
 To form a better style upon it,
 And bend the suppliant knee ;
 Yet, were I blacker than a Hindoo,
 Could I this cashmere stain ?
 For, look, it trickles down the window,
A drop of rain."

The farmer with his creatures fattening,
 But dreading to be poor,
 With pipe in mouth, and fondly flattening
 Against his stable door,
 Surveys his horses and the cattle,
 That model fabrics house,
 And hears from far the tempest tattle
 That marks his prudent spouse ;
 He coughs, and puts a pious tether
 Upon his worldly aims,
 And turns a moment from the weather
 To answer Sunday claims ;
 But then he shies as at a buffet,
 Or stroke of doubtful gain ;
 What is it ? Ah ! he cannot rough it—
A drop of rain.

The labourer with his scanty leisure,
 No longer bound to dig,
 Stares with wide-open mouth of pleasure
 At the rent-paying pig ;

Dim notions of the sacred season
Steal through his stolid head,
And hardly rise to heights of reason
Above his cabbage bed ;
He hears the chimes ring out their numbers,
In his flesh prison pent,
And at the thought of holy slumbers
Feels a dull brute content ;
Till, as he rouses from the vision
Of beef and growing grain,
He finds what routs his whole decision—
A drop of rain.

And then the big clock strikes eleven,
The doors they duly close,
The congregation (six or seven)
Absolved soon seek repose ;
The organ Heaven with music storming
Awakes the usual sound,
And all go through the same performing
In the same dreary round ;
The people snore, and drones the sexton
With his old nasal twang,
The parson claps the steam and text on,
And makes the cushion bang ;
The church is empty, and the Devil
Loves the familiar strain,
Who sent (to show religion's level)
A drop of rain.

ROSA ROSARUM.

"Who will fight beneath my banner—
 Just a rose-leaf and no straws,
 Not without some pretty flaws,
 In the sweet improved new manner,
 For the Donna bright, Juanna,
 Free from bondage, like bad laws?
 I am young, and fair, and fervent,
 And reward each faithful servant
 In the only proper way;
 And to be so near the Donna,
 Rose of roses, is an honour
 That the thorns will soon allay."

(Presbyter :) "Prayer cannot resist you, madam,
 When about my glass of wine
 Fancies linked with feeling twine,
 I am but a son of Adam
 And have learned in the Academ-
 y of Plato the Divine;
 Studied in the grand old fashion
 Something of the joys of passion
 Which exalts the earth-bound clods,
 Though rebuked by saint and sermon
 And the sacred snows of Hermon,
 To Olympus and the gods."

(Donna :) "Welcome, priest, my wide affection
 Marks the gleam of golden ore
 Deep below the dusty lore,
 And the ice of cold correction;
 Kneel, and take my lips' election,
 As my knight for evermore;
 Go and preach a gospel broader,
 Hope for every class and order
 In the refuge of my loves,
 Grace for vice in peer or varlet
 Or the painted thing of scarlet,
 Not reserved for fine kid gloves.

"Who will bear my colours flying
 Victory, that shot and shell
 Never yet have won so well,
 Where the old moustache is lying
 To the young for laurels crying
 And white bosoms as they swell?
 Who will show a fighting nation
 Tost through blood to its salvation
 With its sinews true and tense,
 Marching like one man to glory,
 Half the rapture, half the story
 Of the consecrated sense?"

(Miles :) "Low to you I bow, sweet Siren,
 Head that never stooped to man,
 To a petticoat or plan
 Not rough-hewn of rugged iron,
 Though all dangers did environ
 And the tears of beauty ran;
 Once I laughed at love and shady
 Walks and lispings of the lady
 Who delights in circling arms,
 But escaped from that and this stress
 I have found at last a mistress
 ' In your ripe and rosy charms."

(Donna :) "Soldier, hail, be true and enter
 My great army bound to win,
 Deeming not a kiss is sin,
 Striking lies at their dark centre,
 Showing churchman and dissenter
 Faith that deeper goes than skin;
 Take my touch to give your steeling
 Just the warm rich pulse of feeling
 Which cannot be had for hire,
 And amid your dim conventions,
 The demure and dead intentions,
 Bear my heart of burning fire.

“ Who will serve me, who will carry
Freedom’s tale baptised in fears,
Spell to wipe away all tears,
To the dupes that mart and marry
And among their fleshpots tarry
Till the harvest of the years ?
Mark the music of my paces,
Read the triumph in their traces
Bringing hearts a better tie,
Naked youth that needs no clothing
But its grace, and no betrothing
But the truth that cannot die.”

(Doctor :) “ Queen of loves, the desert moister
Grows beneath your fair white feet,
And the very thorns are sweet ;
I released from the close oyster
Of my dim and dreary cloister
With my pen your summons greet ;
I am but a poor dry student,
Yet I thirst for the imprudent
Now I feel your magic power,
And the dust of old dead ages
Treasured in my yellow pages
Bursts before you into flower.”

(Donna :) “ Scholar, there is room for learning
In my gay and gallant lines,
Where the flag of freedom shines
And the sword for conquests burning
Knows no resting or returning ;
Come, with wisdom that refines ;
Strike into the breast of error
Panic of a new strange terror,
As it trails its serpent length ;
There is room, if but by losses
And in graves or upon crosses,
For the knowledge that is strength.”

"Who can hold the spade to level
 Fraud and force, whate'er would thrust
 Shame or shadow over trust,
 Ripe for blows or laughing revel
 And to face at need the Devil
 With cold water and a crust?
 Who, entangled in my tresses,
 With the flame of these caresses
 Much will do and further dare,
 Dance with neck inside the halter
 And like Isaac on the altar
 Lay his life with little care?"

(Rusticus :) "Wonderful great empress, labour
 Long has hardened me to ill,
 Wrought of iron this rude will
 Ready to unsheathe its sabre
 To befriend a foe or neighbour,
 And to smile and suffer still;
 Pick and axe for you are welcome,
 Though the demons and all hell come,
 You alone can bring me bliss;
 You alone can keep the soiling
 From the horny hand of toiling,
 With the glory of a kiss."

(Donna :) "Weary drudge, yours is a splendour,
 That no crownèd dunce or drone
 On the rack misnamed a throne
 Yet can purchase with the tender
 Of his wealth, though he surrender
 Every stick and precious stone;
 Take my touch upon your shoulder,
 Brave you are but now be bolder,
 And arise a nobler knight
 Of the spade, than those who jingle
 Gilded spurs and mounted mingle
 In a meaner earthlier fight."

THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP.

I have a mind which every matter teaches
Some useful lesson, and it came to pass
In a weak hour, I read some Gladstone speeches
Which opened to me like a sorcerer's glass.
Thunder and lightning! Lo, I had a vision,
Which was too vivid to be all a dream,
It tore from life the veil in grim derision
And bared the ugly soil and ghastly seam.
I saw the Devil in mid revel
At fierce forges of black orgies,
With his bellows and lewd fellows,
In the clamour of his hammer
Shaping rifles, rakes and trifles,
Battle trumpets bright and strumpets,
On his anvil—here a Granville,
There a snob
About his job.
But all were in a mortal haste
And hurried madly on,
They snatched at any pins or paste
Or shadow and were gone.
The very children had no time
To linger on the way ;
They heard the hungry anvil chime,
And dropt their toys and play.
The youngest looked as old as sin,
Their baby brows were wet
With painful dews, and down the din
Like waning stars they set.
And maidens passed with draggled hair,
To which white roses clung,
Yet, in their fallen beauty fair,
With curses on their tongue.
And ever they stared wildly back,
As though some dreadful sight

Dogged step by step their trembling track,
And faded in the night.

Ah, withered woman, hoary man,
Who had grown gray in vice,
With padded breast and flirting fan
And souls as sacrifice,

Came mincing by, and bowing still
Above their empty parts,

Hugged to the grave the hated ill
Which poisoned all their hearts.

And in the rushing and the crushing of the race
They cast petitions in Perdition's very face,
Unto the Being whom unseeing yet they swore
To worship ever though they never learned His lore ;
But yielding idle to no bridle made by Him
They chose to follow every hollow passing whim.
They had no leisure but for pleasure and the joys
That sprang from making and then breaking oaths and toys.

But there the Devil drest
All in his Sunday best,
Moved gaily up and down
And tinkered Church and Crown
With some new tawdry plan—
A perfect gentleman.
He rubbed his hands and smiled
Till bishops were beguiled,
And when he smote as slayer
He breathed a pious prayer,
Which easy Churchmen charmed
And critics quite disarmed.
He had such modern modes
And pliant Gladstone codes
That none could be alarmed,
And poets burst in odes.
His manners were so good
And high in credit stood,
The door he never slammed
And no one rudely damned.

I saw no dear St. Dunstan with the tongs,
 To keep the Devil quiet,
And curb the souls that loved adulterous songs
 With wholesome Spartan diet ;
But in the Church the mummary of the stage
 And wondrous new gymnastics,
And leering from their stolen Confession cage
 The smug ecclesiastics.
Lo, mothers who could better dance than read
 Would offer up a daughter,
And (from French novels fresh) devoutly lead
 The pretty lamb to slaughter.
And to and fro in ebb and flow
He lifted up his golden cup,
While thousands drank and downward sank,
Betwixt the strokes that levelled oaks,
Like fragile straws, with ancient laws.
The monarch bent,
 The painted Siren
Incontinent,
 To blood and iron.
It seemed so empty and so dim,
 The chamber that he trod,
In which all classes bowed to him
 And worshipped as their God.
It was not Heaven, it was not earth,
 It was not utter hell,
And through the gloomy gleams of dearth
 Rang but the dinner bell.
Men were as busy about nought
 As if they governed lands,
And only sinned for lack of thought
 Just with their aimless hands.
They loved and gambled, strove and drank,
 Or burnt the sacred oil,
Because they carried wealth or rank
 And knew no better toil.
Oh ! in the grimness of the dimness, as they lightly rose and
 fell,

Where men and brothers preyed on others and yet deemed
 it all was well,
 While lowly meekness and pure weakness suffered, not the
 wicked way,
 And the red rigour of the trigger taught the savage soul to
 pray,
 Or fools hived honey and made money for the ready-witted
 rogue,
 And gilded Fashion turned each passion and each vice into
 the vogue,
 No glimpse of brightness in the lightness dawned upon the
 troubled sight,
 But stark confusion wrought delusion to a darkness worse
 than night.

I saw the pious proper Devil,
 At little cost and pains,
 Had found a workshop and his level
 In empty idle brains.

SIXES AND SEVENS.

Man is born to toil and trouble,
 Trials fall on him a host,
 And they say the pains are double
 In the t'other world for most;
 And your sin becomes a ghost,
 With an order on damnation
 For the next young generation,
 Certain as the parcel post.

Fortune too, sir, is the devil,
 Dealing each some dirty trick—
 Here a shade across the revel,
 There a husband's vengeful stick,
 Or a blessing in a brick;
 Granting, though they be not willing,
 This a crown and that a shilling,
 One a kingdom, one a kick.

Maidens now are not particular,
And for ways lascivious burn,
Zola, cigarettes, auricular
Practices they used to spurn,
Cinerary acts and urn ;
And, though lashed with songs and sermons,
Hanker for their unwashed Germans
And to French professors turn.

Women too will not put stitches
In their henpecked husbands' socks,
Have the whip-hand, wear the breeches,
Dabble in the sea of Stocks
To be wrecked upon its rocks,
Dare to ask improper questions,
And regardless of digestions
Drink like men in blooming frocks.

Women, in pursuit of fuel
For sensation's sinking fire,
Take to doubtful games and jewel-
Stealing, in the best attire,
Till they get what they desire,
And suppose the little scandal
Well is worth the costly candle,
Though they make their lords perspire.

Women have revised their nature,
Who reveal no rag of grace,
And expect the Legislature
To confer both speed and space,
If they cannot keep the pace,
And arrayed in manly dresses
Advertise their cheap caresses,
Up and down the market place.

Things at sixes are and sevens,
And the world seems upside down,
While we strut across the Heavens
As if through a country town,

And with many an awful noun
 Clap our God into the crucible,
 If He may be found reducible—
 Though refusing still to drown.

And, in spite of insect powder
 Freely dropt about their lugs,
 Minor poets yet sing louder
 And now quite divide with pugs,
 Curates, actresses, and jugs
 Of the last new hideous fashion
 All the honour and compassion,
 Wasted on such bards and b—gs.

Letters are not for the nation,
 But a sort of private show
 For a Mutual Admiration
 Gang, in a new Rotten Row,
 Who just for each other blow,
 And from their own roost or midden
 Drive, as off the fruit forbidden,
 Other cocks that fain would crow.

Politics and timber-hewing
 The grand old familiar firm
 Undertakes, with some reviewing,
 For a more than natural term,
 Though at times rude people squirm;
 While the country (John and Mary Ann)
 Under heels octogenarian,
 Writhes a crushed and tortured worm.

Murder too as done by Deeming
 In a fine artistic way,
 With a *minimum* of screaming,
 And a *maximum* of pay,
 Can amuse us for a day—
 Or a week, if the pet Siren
 Beautiful, more brass than iron
 Does not figure at the play.

Truth has grown so scarce and scurv
 We can hardly truth detect ;
 But, now all is topsy turvy
 And the Church her own elect,
 From the rogues she should eject,
 Cannot tell and yet is prouder,
 And explosives are "tooth-powder,"
 What the deuce can we expect ?

A PLEA FOR POETRY.

I.

They say, the muses now have gone
 From haunted hill and valley,
 And wander through the night alone
 In dirty street or alley ;
 With tresses torn and red cheeks pale,
 They fly from more Mundella,
 Not even get shelter from the gale
 In Gladstone's big Umbrella ;
 Not one is wanted, in this time
 Of shops and banking shady,
 That pets the ballet girl or mime,
 But not the classic lady.

2.

They say, sweet Poetry is dead
 As Hurlingham's last pigeon,
 And only now by school-girls read
 Or fools that like Religion ;
 It's out of fashion and of date,
 And cannot find a niche in
 A decent room, if pretty Kate
 Should hug it in the kitchen ;
 Though it may echo in the slums,
 A sop to soothe the Masses,
 To tambourines and kettle drums
 Of "Hallelujah Lasses".

3.

They say, the world is waxing old,
 And long has left such trifles
 As sentiments, and goes for gold
 And Companies and rifles ;
 It has outlived its silly youth
 And honesty and dances,
 And does not care a d—n for truth
 Or rubbish like romances ;
 There is no leisure in this age
 For subjects so desultory,
 When all are busy with the stage
 And swindling or adultery.

4.

They say, mankind are mostly fools,
 In spite of well-paid piety,
 State coddling with its boards and schools
 And all the grand Society ;
 And folks are really not so wise
 As penny journals bluster,
 Who trade in souls as merchandise
 And make our flag a duster ;
 And with new sciences and arms,
 Home Rule and Hyde Park revel,
 Talk, vivisection, baby farms,
 We are going to the Devil.

LE BON DIABLE.

I.

Ah ! he was not crowned in the Abbey,
 And he sits on no gilded throne,
 While his coat may be often shabby
 And his voice have a tipsy tone ;
 He may beg with the monkey Jacko
 And a wheezing organ grind,

Or smell of the worst tobacco
And not whisk a tail behind ;
He is given to sweet variety,
In the cabin grimed with soot,
Or the cream of the grand Society,
Though he hides his cloven foot

2.

With the old man he may mellow
And brag of the better times,
But is always our good fellow
For the work or the wedding chimes ;
He is pious with the parson,
And a friend to the frisky dames
Or the fool who would go for arson—
If he had but insured the Thames ;
But whatever his luck or level,
Blue eyes or a swindler's hand,
Though we do not call him the Devil,
He is lord of this blooming land.

3.

He has dropt all the fires and terrors
That made timid hearts so shy,
And he winks at our crimes as errors
With a large and lenient eye ;
For the falsehood he styles romancing,
And the blackest cheats and shames
With a flourish of mere financing
He decks with the nicest names ;
He is tender to each transgression—
If turned out in a decent way,
Dubs adultery indiscretion—
When it can afford to pay.

4.

He will chant you the holiest hymn's tone,
If he only gets a chance,
And without the least odour of brimstone
He will pipe to the sinner's dance ;

On the Stock Exchange he dabbles
In the dirtiest "pools" and pies,
And with lips of crimson babbles
The old luscious dainty lies;
Yet we love the dear good Devil,
And yield him the monarch's place,
When he joins in our naughty revel
Or comes with a woman's face.

UN ENFANT TERRIBLE.

1.

I have to make a sad confession
Unto the public ear,
That is not tied to one transgression
Nor to a single tear;
For in Society
A sore anxiety
I am to even my greatest chums,
When all my fingers turn to thumbs,
Because I am so sadly errable,
And sure to drop the dirtiest plate
(At dinner) on some Potentate—
Un enfant terrible.

2.

And when a playful Royal Highness,
Whose name I cannot give,
Had drawn me (notwithstanding shyness)
With graces fugitive;
I talked of Thackeray,
And then of Baccarat,
Oblivious of the awful past,
Which on that precious game had cast
A shadow *he* had not found bearable,
And asked him if he carried oft
His counters, as at Tranby Croft—
Un enfant terrible.

3.

And when the chat was all of horses,
 Home Rule and raptures brief,
 I changed the topic to divorces,
 Forgetting the poor Chief ;
 But he was present,
 And turned unpleasant ;
 Although I quoted Scripture next,
 While offering comfort in a text,
 And hoped its figleaf would be wearable,
 To prove that woman sinned the first,
 And ever was (O she !) the worst—
 Un enfant terrible.

4.

And when, just after his queer marriage,
 I met a sporting peer,
 Who drove a barmaid in his carriage,
 No better for the beer ;
 Of odd assortment
 And dim deportment,
 I jested in my happiest mood,
 And found in his own scandal food,
 Unconscious of my pointed parable,
 And wondered why the lady fair
 Looked at me with that loving air—
 Un enfant terrible.

NAUGHTY BUT NICE.

I.

I cannot, sir, I will not say
 What dreadful words were spoken,
 Betwixt the dawning and the day,
 And what great law was broken ;
 Should I confess
 To a caress,

Then up would rise the Rabbi Schread,
 To cloud my pleasant places,
 And loose with stern avenging tread
 His bloodhounds on my traces ;
 It was, O bosoms not of ice,
Naughty but nice.

2.

Alas, I know my flesh is frail,
 Most pure and proper madam,
 And the fierce passions often ail
 This fallen son of Adam ;
 The rose's curve,
 I would observe,
 It ever was my joy to seek,
 In wild-flower or in woman,
 On petal or a pretty cheek,
 And I am very human ;
 I study feet that play like mice,
Naughty but nice.

3.

And thou, Blue Girl from Newnham shades,
 In classic streams an angler,
 Who hopest like Minerva's maids
 Some day to be a Wrangler ;
 I do assure
 Thy mind demure,
 My loyal heart is always kind
 To wise or foolish lasses,
 Who will not have the window blind
 Or blossom under glasses ;
 I sharply draw the line at vice,
Naughty but nice.

4.

And what *she* did it matters not,
 Even if she raved of Ruskin,
 Or mud had left a lingering stain,
 Upon her tennis buskin ;

If haply then,
 Afar from ken,
 Our hands and lips some treason hatched
 And were not often idle,
 Or found on meeting that they matched,
 And needed fear no bridle;
 We dreamed of sweet forbidden spice,
Naughty but nice.

FLAPDOODLE.

I.

Cant about the Constitution,
 Home of liberties, and stuff,
 Food at best of Revolution
 Or a party bid and puff;
 Cant about our glorious banners
 Flying on a hundred seas,
 Bringing trade and drunken manners
 To the dupes in ignorant ease;
 Honeyed lip and hand of iron—
 If within a silken glove,
 Though the shades of shame environ—
This is what the people love.

2.

Blarney of an open Bible
 That the prosperous sinner reads,
 But to find the fittest libel
 For the brother he misleads;
 Rubbish for the rank oration
 Mouthed in some Iscariot's part,
 Or the last false adulation
 Offered to the Masses' heart;
 Capers of my Lord Fitznoodle
 Cut with ballet legs and gas,
 All the humbug and flapdoodle
 Welcome to the British Ass.

3.

True or false it does not matter,
 If it be the latest thing,
 Wedded to a pretty patter
 With the right improper sting;
 If it please the precious Quorum
 And can murmur mystic sounds
 Paid to Rimmon or Decorum,
 It may push beyond the bounds;
 Yet it always must be gammon
 Cunningly disguised, to strike
 Itching ears with modes of Mammon;
This is what the people like.

4.

Flattery and tender twaddle
 Just to tickle traders' mind,
 Who believe their work and waddle
 Are the wonder of mankind;
 Who believe a shoppy nation
 Vulgarly attired and shod,
 Is a credit to Creation
 And may patronise its God;
 Sops for fools in house of crystal
 Casting stones at all who pass,
 Lies to hide the robber's pistol,
 Welcome to the British Ass.

ALAS! A LASS.

I met her betwixt dawn and day,
 When lights and shadows were at play,
 Upon a pretty violet way;
 I stept aside to let her pass,
 Alas!
 She gave the kindest look and bow,
 I feel their magic sweetness now
 Alas!

And all the mystery of the morn,
The passion of the flower and thorn,
She mirrored fondly as a glass,
Alas ! A lass.

I met her at the noontide hour,
Betwixt the sunshine and the shower,
Beneath the old and ivied tower,
That dropt on us its waving mass,
Alas !

She gave me then her lily hands,
As queens give laws to subject lands,
Alas !

And all my heart from winter gloom,
Seemed bursting into glorious bloom ;
She soared above our human class,
Alas ! A lass !

I met her betwixt eve and night,
Ere early stars were big and bright,
Or earth had lost its emerald light
And donned the garish robe of gas,
Alas !

And touched our lips by happy chance,
That turned my world to wild romance,
Alas !

I saw her lips like rosebuds pout,
And all my love went rushing out,
Refined from feelings coarse and crass,
Alas ! A lass !

I met her betwixt parents twain,
She had a Cræsus in her train
And eyes with wolfish lust of gain ;
Her altered face was bold as brass,
Alas !
She never knew me, had no care,

And killed me with her cruel stare,
 Alas !
 And then she asked the golden cad
 That bore her meanness and last fad,
 Whose was that ugly awkward ass ;
 Alas ! A lass !

THE FORLORN HOPE.

Thirty-eight pious clergymen stood on the shore,
 And observed that the Sea was a puddle,
 And protested the Tide should not flow any more,
 Though their notions were rather a muddle ;
 They had thirty-eight mops in their reverend hands,
 Which they brandished in zeal, while they trembled
 For the fate of the castles they built of the sands,
 If their doubtings and fears were dissembled ;
 But the Tide came in nearer still yet, in the face
 Of their valorous airs and their attitudes,
 For it knew below high-watermark was the place
 Which upheld these professors of platitudes.

There were Bishops and Deans and most excellent men,
 Who mistook their small lamp for a beacon
 And discoursed of new laws that were out of their ken,
 All inspired by the splendid Archdeacon ;
 O they handled their mops in a masterly style
 And they made quite a gallant commotion,
 And looked brave at the incoming waves with a smile
 In the triumph of trustful devotion ;
 But the Tide took no heed of that thin solemn line
 And rolled on to the edge of their border,
 For it drew its commission from fountains Divine
 And was part of an infinite Order.

But the champions still on their battlements stood,
 Though the base was beginning to crumble,
 While proclaiming their fortress was final and good
 And if shaken yet never could tumble ;

And they pushed at the Ocean with vigorous mops
In defence of their flimsy foundation,
And they threw it at times some convenient sops
Or just winked at a wild innovation ;
But the Tide came in swifter, and angrily flung
On their site unsubstantial its billows,
And its shadow rose up and a horror it hung
Right above their pet sinecure pillows.

There were heroes among them and saints of the best
And mere placemen with lineaments foxy,
Though they all were in proper phylacteries drest
And would die for their dear Orthodoxy ;
And they flourished their mops and appealed to the Past
When the high-water mark was a mystery,
And they clung to their refuge of sand to the last,
In the teeth of sure reason and history ;
But the Tide had no pity, and whirled them away
With their castles and curious vesting,
The more sweeping because of the stubborn delay,
To the end the Archdeacon protesting.

DONNA JUANNA.

Many loves I have, and all
Gallant knights obey my call,
When they thirst for honour ;
Soldiers with their bearded lips,
Mariners who swear in ships,
Drink to me their Donna ;
Heroes of the sword or gown,
Fond of the improper noun,
Fight beneath my banner ;
Those that woo a wandering star
And the verbs irregular,
Serve the fair Juanna.

Yet no blot upon me rests,
 If a thousand manly breasts
 Beat to win my beauty;
 Or old fools with palsied arms,
 Cheated by my fatal charms,
 Do their neighbours' duty;
 If the gay and gilded boy
 Proud to be my passing toy
 Wears the empty collar,
 Or the Jew who fattens still
 On his comrade's need and ill,
 Drops for me his dollar.

Scientists, who dare to probe
 The abyss, prefer my robe
 To the midnight candle,
 Heedless of their debt to Truth,
 And renew the days of youth
 In the skirts of scandal;
 Grey philosophers, with brows
 Crossed by stern and studious vows,
 Leave their sombre Syren,
 And pursuing in hot haste
 Culture of a sweeter taste,
 Go to bed with Byron.

Pioneers from frozen parts
 Touched by me resume their hearts
 With the first affection,
 And at last forget the whole
 Path of glory to the Pole
 In their new direction;
 Travellers (not on the sea)
 Only round a cup of tea,
 If I but solicit,
 At the waving of my hand
 Fly to the remotest land—
 Not to be explicit.

Prelates, who yet find a place
 For the world and worldly grace
 In their shrines' devotion,
 If I give the faintest hint,
 Rush into my arms or print
 With a strange commotion;
 Lay aside their solemn looks
 And confess the power of cooks
 Or consult their cellar,
 And assume the festive wreath,
 Or like puppets dance beneath
 Gladstone's great umbrella.

Statesmen fettered to the wheel,
 Steadfast, and with nerves of steel
 Proof against all comers,
 Big at tape and income tax,
 Smitten with my smile relax,
 And will romp like mummers;
 Patriots who live a lie,
 And (if paid) would gladly die
 For some stupid notion,
 Quite forget their sacred trust,
 When I flatter them and just,
 Touch with magic potion.

Forth my knights in service go
 In the empire to and fro,
 Seeking wild adventures,
 Here the dregs of sorrow's cup,
 There a lady fair locked up
 With her fat debentures;
 Eager are they to redress
 Woes of beauty in distress
 Or in the wrong stable,
 And to publish (though at nights)
 Women's sweet and sovereign rights
 Of the new Round Table.

Cavaliers with hoary head
Follow me with frisky tread
 When I do but beckon,
And with sad and senile love
Kiss the stain upon my glove
 And no dangers reckon;
They remember not grey hairs
And put on most youthful airs,
 If I chance to enter,
And the coldest Churchman thaws
At the passion of my laws,
 Though I am Dissenter.

Many a leader of the land,
Fired by my caressing hand
 And ripe lips' solution,
Flies at some great kingdom's throat,
Wafted by my petticoat
 To red revolution;
Or distracted by my frown
Topples a grand party down
 Broken into pieces,
Heedless of the hungry yelp
Raised by nephews robbed of help
 And exacting nieces.

Oft the General, so harsh
To his troops, whose stern moustache
 Strikes in heroes terror,
At one word of coaxing turns
From his iron rules and burns
 To commit some error;
Chooses with me to delay,
And though duty calls away
 To brave action nimble,
Yet rejects his bonds and plan,
And prefers to bear my fan
 Or pick up the thimble.

Despots who despise the cry
Of a nation's agony
 Wrung from ravished places,
At the rustle of my dress
Hurried headlong to transgress
 Melt in my embraces ;
Deaf to pity's softer aims,
As to justice and the claims
 Sobbed by fear and famine,
Steeled against their people's joy
They at once my simplest toy
 Tenderly examine.

Ah ! The sour and learnèd fool
Comes to study in my school,
 Greedy for the session,
And ignores the dues of age
When he turns a dearer page
 In some indiscretion ;
Grows more wise in pleasant ways,
When the offering he lays
 At my temple porches,
Though beneath the flowers are stings,
And the moth its curious wings
 In my candle scorches.

Women, that would do and dare
To be rid of grinding care
 And the last new waddle—
Fashionable shapes and shrugs,
Wondrous things in lords and jugs—
 Make of me their model ;
Merry maids, that wield the pen
And refuse the yoke of men
 Or prefer their freedom,
True philosopher and friend
Find with me, and manners mend
 In the wilds of Edom.

Ladies on and off the stage
Or uncertain as to age
 And with all at schism,
Looking in my fervent face
Soon revive the vanished grace
 And old organism ;
And released from social chains
Now employ their own quick brains
 Without one apology ;
And, in hope thy fresher scenes,
Liberty, can make them queens,
 Curtsey to chronology.

Often steals the jaded King,
When he would enjoy a fling
 Far from public forum,
From my book a pretty page,
And disowns the golden cage
 Of his d—d decorum ;
He rejects the royal task
And throws off the grinning mask
 For the mess of pottage,
And for fun or mischief ripe
Takes his quiet glass and pipe
 In my open cottage.

Girls confined in stays and starch
Ever at the mill, who march
 Only to set orders,
Checked and chafed at every turn
When for breezy life they burn
 Flee across my borders ;
Kick aside the shafts, and burst
From their bondage, as none durst
 But my hot young Arabs,
Rather than abide their fate
And in dulness vegetate,
 Penned and pinned like Scarabs.

North and south my servants fly,
Bridge the ocean, scale the sky
 In the gay old fashion,
Laugh at bounds, upon the dark
Stamp the imperishable mark
 Kindled by my passion ;
East and west in journey strange
Fearlessly they romp and range,
 Force from peril pleasure,
Empires leave or lay in dust,
Fired by me with conquering trust
 Which is all their treasure.

Love of me illumines the dearth,
Seeks the jewels of the earth
 Hidden in its bowels,
Bids the sage his lore divulge,
And the fighting man indulge
 In unheard of vowels ;
Love of me compels the brave
To explore the very grave
 For the truth and maggots—
To defy the hangman's rope
Or the blessing of the Pope
 And be food for faggots.

Up and down inspired by me,
For the goodly days to be
 Tilt the knights of knowledge,
Wring its secret from the star
And break down convention's bar
 That would close the college ;
On they urge the fiery quest,
With their lances still in rest
 Making strife a story,
Some in velvet, some in rags,
Some with feet on earthly crags
 And their eyes in glory.

Many names have I, and each
 May a living lesson teach
 Those I choose to honour,
 But though I have many forms
 And survive a thousand storms
 I am still the Donna ;
 All that scorn the musty schools
 And the chains of chartered fools
 Bear aloft my banner ;
 Beauty, wit, address and skill,
 Power that waits on iron will,
 Fight for fair Juanna.

THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL.

PROLOGUE.

(Diabolus loquitur.)

The world is mine, and Ill sustained by Science
 And not with dead men's bones or infants' caul,
 Need drown no longer and can bid defiance
 To outmanœuvred Christ and musty Paul.
 I am protected now, and those iniquities
 That once were hardly sighed with bated breath,
 Are all preserved as worthy old antiquities
 By jealous dupes who grudge his scythe to death.
 Societies, that raven without number,
 Have pledged my being to subscribing fools ;
 They will not let me die or even slumber,
 And wrangle over me in rusty schools.
 Sour pulpiteers and prigs, with crabbed Divinity
 Of ignorance and swelling sounds and pride,
 That never knew the virtue of virginity
 And have no soul, keep canting on my side.
 My form is whitewashed, and the latest fashion
 Speaks of me with a spice of grave respect,

And prudes and parsons weep in mild compassion
 That I am still not one of the elect.
 So my appearance does not crave apology,
 Good times relieve me of the tedious task,
 Since I am sanctioned by the best theology
 And wear decorum's sweetest fig-leaf mask.
 You hear me lisping out a naughty sentence,
 Which red lips fancy has a savour nice,
 Sure yet to win the rapture of repentance
 From some dear priest who ministers to vice.
 My courts are crowded still with many a maiden,
 They come their tender lapses to confess
 With the last thing in scents and scandal laden,
 And lovingly they linger to caress.
 In drawing-rooms I air my soft hypocrisy,
 I gather round me duchesses and deans,
 The brightest flower of Britain's aristocracy
 That gaily on my inspiration leans.
 I suit the taste of every Royal Person
 And gallant soldiers who excel at cards,
 Just as I taught that erudite Macpherson
 The mystic ways of manufactured bards.
 I get by heart the ready lie and lesson
 For frisky matrons mincing to their play,
 And help the erring wife to put that dress on
 Which some one not her husband has to pay.
 Where am I not? My modernized existence
 Is wanted now at every cultured throng;
 The rostrum traffics with my hired assistance,
 I find the sauce for creed and comic song.
 'Tis true they water me with holy chrisms
 And style abnormal growth my saddest sore,
 And sin when murmured in mild euphemisms
 Cannot offend where princely prelates snore.
 So, if each *custos morum* glosses evil
 And dull abstainers put their law for Christ's,
 The world is surely going to the Devil
 And innocents still keep illicit trysts.

GONIOBOMBUKES IN THE CHURCH.

All the pious virtue now is vanity,
 Though fair penitents may pout,
 And the creed of gray old Christianity
 With the Bourbons is played out ;
 Christ Himself has left the lifeless Churches
 Busy with mere tailors' text,
 Wrangling in their pitiful researches
 What new vestment shall be next ;
 Like a landlord, who from distant drudges
 Wrings the very dregs of gain,
 While his greedy agents wreak their grudges
 On the ruins that remain.

Bishops,* though their sees are in a muddle,
 Fly from duties more than paid,
 While the Rector naked in his puddle
 Sits and cries aloud for aid ;
 Drive their clergy mad with curious questions,
 What their washing costs them, how
 Certain taxes suit their tired digestions,
 If they keep a milking cow ;
 If they dine at six or social seven
 And make sermons brief and blithe,
 Or have found the rugged way to Heaven
 Smoothed with teas and punctual tithe.

Institutions lag behind the masses,
 Who leave teachers in the lurch,
 And employment Christ has given to asses,—
 All progresses but the Church ;
 State-established forms may please the pigeon
 Fashioned only to be plucked,
 Death is at the heart of that religion
 Which its guardians dry have sucked ;

* This did happen in the absence of the Bishop of Exeter.

State-protected worship and its clerics,
With their temple's crazy poles,
Cannot long be saved by high hysterics
Or deceive awakening souls.

Thought, a thousand years ahead of mumbling
Priests who darken Heaven with lies,
Soon will sweep away the footstep stumbling
And let in the larger skies ;
Life, that has outgrown the garb monastic
And the rule of cunning loathes,
Kicks against its nurse ecclesiastic
With his pap and swaddling-clothes.
Demos, now no baby but a giant,
Sick of serpent cheats and charms,
Taught by suffering to be self-reliant
Strangles them in toil-stained arms.

Little do they reckon, priest and people,
How they serve my sovereign call
With their stupid antics, while the steeple
Totters lower to its fall ;
How the placemen perched in lofty station,
Fattening on the booty thieved,
Lure along with rose leaves to damnation
Fools who wish to be deceived ;
How I stand behind the old abuses
Propt with reasons urged too well,
Just to smoothe the way with smart excuses
Good enough for paving hell.

When with anguish comes the fair transgressor,
Pleading guilt in look and gait,
At the elbow of the glib confessor
I have pat some tender bait ;
Prompt to give a vile and useless pardon
Purchased with a pinch of dust,
Which is only meant to hold and harden
Beauty in a life of lust ;

I explain away the sin and deeper
 Plunge the culprit in the mire,
 While more closely to the fated sleeper
 Creeps the black and hungry fire.

Vainly do the starved and striving masses
 Turn to teachers who are blind,
 All religions now are for the classes
 And on poor men burdens bind ;
 When they ask for comfort in their losses,
 Bread to stay the breaking hearts,
 They are shown the candlesticks and crosses
 Or mere music sung in parts ;
 They are mocked with empty forms' directions
 And the patterns of new stoles,
 Agonies of stale genuflections,
 Which are sorry food for souls.

Where is Christ ? The gold-bedizened altar
 Bears the impress of His name,
 But, while He is stifled in a halter,
 Dies the sacrificial flame ;
 His expiring creed my damned Democracy
 Teaches just to lie with grace,
 How to organise a paid hypocrisy
 Tricked with harlot gauds and lace ;
 While behind their masks the perjured scorners
 Laugh and piety make cheap,
 And the Flies keep buzzing in their corners
 Over the old carrion heap.

GONIOBOMBUKES IN THE STATE.

Propt on the lame staff of stale tradition,
 Feudal rags of the wrong Past,
 With its farce of solemn imposition,
 Totters the old fraud at last ;
 Not found out for ages, it rejected
 Schooling of the fire and storm,

Counsels of the great, and now detected
Withers at thy breath, Reform ;
Feels a sickening qualm, a coward trembling,
And its lips with lying pleas
Blanch beneath their mask of gay dissembling,
Paint that cannot cure disease.

Slowly the poor duped and dazzled nation
Sees the sinking of the sand,
And at straws (to save its false foundation)
Clutches with despairing hand ;
Throwing overboard some friend or Jonah,
Here a party, there a tax,
Then the gorged and greedy landed owner,
To escape the judgment axe ;
Giving sops to make the downfall tender,
Lower rent and broken chain,
Even a church betrayed by its defender,
Prayers and curses—all in vain.

Statesmanship has fled to fairer regions,
Trimming now is at the helm,
While adventurers in hungry legions
Fatten on the dying realm ;
And the rats, ere they forsake the vessel
Only for its wreck insured,
Strike each other as they stink and wrestle
For the prey they have secured ;
While they glut their spite and wanton wishes,
Sparing not the temple store,
And delight to gnaw the dirty dishes
They have licked and licked before.

All is sacrificed to perjured party,
With its double tongue and face,
And the words and acts alone are hearty,
Which pursue some sordid place ;
Who will care for right, when princes rattle
But the counters or the dice,

And their Parliaments are just a battle
Fought between the frogs and mice?
Principles are shaped by private lucre,
Though it be the public fate,
And the rival champions cheat at euchre
O'er the death-bed of the State.

Ha, behind the country's quack physicians
I unseen am standing still,
Meting out to my pet politicians
Each new swindling pact and pill;
Mine the hand that shapes the mocking measure
Passed to stop the sufferer's cry,
And, while legislators take their pleasure,
Starve the people in their sty;
Mine the foot that, when grown fierce and sadder
They would struggle to the fount,
Kicks away the grand remedial ladder,
Justice, whereby they might mount.

I keep sounding the loud brazen clapper
Of the agitator's tale,
With his victims' money dressed and dapper,
With the borrowed pipe and ale;
I inspire the promise to be broken,
Which has compassed earth and skies,
Ere the ink that is its idle token
Lavished on the paper dries;
I create and spread the specious libel,
To which fools in fetters dance—
Not the Temperance of God's own Bible,
But the false God Temperance.

For the stupid aims and arts outrageous,
To preserve their honoured vice
Or diseases, with the Acts Contagious,
I alone in all suffice;
In my aid the Government is trusting,
Which on dirty profit doats,

While the Gospel after Opium thrusting
 Down the curséd Indian throats ;
 While they let wild Missions haunt and harry
 China's nose, till out of joint,
 And the good news of damnation carry
 At the bayonet's bloody point.

Yet ungrateful I cannot be, when a
 Nation serves my plans so well,
 Marching on the broad road to Gehenna,
 Solaced by the dinner bell ;
 When in Parliament with blank derision
 Christ's most holy Name is met,
 And the settlement of each division
 Adds to old dishonour's debt ;
 When the Members take to courses nasty
 And make privileges toys,
 Ply seduction and from pæderasty
 Draw unowned illicit joys.

GONIOBOMBUKES IN THE STREET.

Two long ears that stretch as far as Thulé,
 And with itching of unease
 Greedily devour the messes duly
 Blown from the Antipodes,
 Or served up with home sauce by the nation
 To the tune of festive drums,
 When the linen washed in public station
 Brings the bill in solemn sums ;
 Ready for the latest trick, when, presto !
 Some fresh conjuror of the land
 Juggles tax or sop or manifesto
 In his false and filching hand.

Grubby nose that, buried in the manger
 Picking out the richest corn,
 Does not scent the certain signs of danger,
 Smell of fire now nearer borne ;

Sniffing at the hay that might be better,
If it be a trifle old,
And the safety of the friendly fetter,
Just because it is not gold;
Thrusting back a tried and true affection
For the teaching of new schools,
And the poor relief of sham Protection
An umbrella but for fools.

Mouth that opens merely as a glutton's
For debauches or a bribe,
And would eat the soldier's very buttons
Or his orphans' tears imbibe;
Never satisfied, though feeders fawning
Throng around with hourly baits,
And for something sweeter further yawning,
Though the country be in straits;
Living but to eat and for blind orgies,
As when brute with Satyr sups,
With the heart of those unkingly Georges
Who left nothing but cracked cups.

Legs that kick against religious bridle
And yet backward slowly wend,
Shambling lower down with follies idle
To the Bonfire at the end;
Broken-kneed by falls, and scarred and scabby
By diseases hardly named,
Like some statesman in his *toga* shabby,
While successful not ashamed;
Trampling on the sick and poor, with coward
Heels that count a sore offence
Weakness, and rich humbugs or a Howard
Guard with pious impotence.

What is this vile monster proud and pampered,
Just a stomach and no more,
By no scruples of refinement hampered,
If its larder has a store?

What is this that like an ogre lunches
On its choicer children's flesh,
And if dropping the sweet morsel munches
Ere the night the same afresh ?
Ramparted by crazy tower and steeple,
Ribbing up its sovereign mass,
This coarse Thing is the superior People,
Made by votes a Crownèd Ass.

Poets pipe to it, and wake no pleasure
In its vulgar carcase stuffed
With foul provender, and pour their treasure
Vainly forth to be rebuffed ;
Genius mourns and moves the rocks and timber
Vainly with its wild sad spells,
Though the artilleries of Heaven unlimber
And shoot out their thunder shells ;
But when charlatans the jocund fiddle
Strike to bloody tunes of France,
And red fires unfold their angry riddle,
Then the Beast delights to dance.

I am pleased, my Brute, so dear to squarson
In beef-witted port-wine haze,
Is prepared so soon to play at arson,
With the kingdom in a blaze ;
Just to win a crotchet's dear solution
In anarchic smoke and reek,
And to cook in flames of revolution
Dinner for a day or week ;
Just to warm its mean and mangey shoulders
In the bright and passing flash,
Till the remedy of ruin smoulders
Into black and formless ash.

Well my pupil now its lesson masters,
How to wreck a royal race,
And displays a talent for disasters
Worthy of my special place ;

Rogues are useful, but the downright stupid
 Ever was my dearest tool,
 And the wiles of commerce or of Cupid
 Feeble are to a wise fool ;
 So I place him high in paying corners,
 And forbid him to let in
 Heroes, saints and bards and maiden mourners—
 Donkey in a lion skin.

GONIOBOMBUKES IN SOCIETY.

I delight in that supreme abstraction
 Grinding hourly at the golden mill
 Nothing, sentenced to sublime inaction
 And in earthquakes only to sit still ;
 Just to dress and undress for the dinner
 Or some naked joy and naughty dance,
 And to paint the sweet and pretty sinner
 With rose-water of polite romance ;
 Cultivating beards and thoughtless babble
 Of green fields in gay and gaslit rooms,
 While with social dynamite they dabble,
 Sweep the streets and worship their pet brooms.

But what is the paradise of fashion
 And the fools that blindly in it play,
 With their silver bells and paper passion,
 What outsider can pretend to say ?
 White-gloved gentlemen and powdered ladies
 All of easy virtue enter in,
 And unite before they plunge in Hades
 To make science of decorous sin ;
 Yet to name the very best society
 From the palace or the pew or stage,
 Duchess, *demi-monde* and Jews' variety,
 Would require a Royal Personage.

Rogues who ought to swing as high as Haman
 While they leave a country in the lurch,
 Here just take the roughness off the layman
 In the shade of an obliging Church ;

But why blame promiscuous caresses
And grand dames that like Herodias live,
Or the primrose path of tithed excesses,
If the priest his benediction give ;
If the sullied darling can but dish up
With her costly cates and venal smile,
The bland presence of some princely squishop
Who both worlds will gravely reconcile ?

Lord Flapdoodle flirts with Mistress Mary,
When he is not snoring at his club,
And they both (who vow *nil admirari*)
Lick the boots of any royal cub ;
Lady Lawless makes some rapid running
With the beardless boy her seven days' pet,
And old Bigwig tries his padded cunning
In the pastures of raw Miss Coquette ;
Dandies drawl of some preserve or rookery
At the feast with gilt vulgarians crammed,
And betwixt false compliments and cookery
All agree that all outside be damned.

In this charmed and charming circle enter
Dupes, and those that fatten on their purse
Blowing bubbles, and the stray dissenter
With a gay archdeacon as wet nurse ;
Now and then a traveller, or lion
From the battle with his wounds scarce healed,
Or a penny pulpiteer of Sion
With some cheap salvation just revealed ;
Men grown rich on soaps and pills and polish
Or some puffed adulterated ale,
Who would God and government abolish
If they cleared a sixpence by the sale.

Women with their ethics very latent
But yet more bewitching from the spots,
Manufacturers with rings and patent
Processes for wondrous pans and pots ;

Merchant, millionaire and foreign banker,
 Scientist who deals with deadly spores,
 In the Great Umbrella huddled hanker
 For the Egypt of forbidden stores ;
 All combine to buzz and sting and chatter
 Of strange husbands and voluptuous wives,
 And to lie with careless grace and scatter
 Dirt upon whatever good survives.

Here philanthropy that would not harm a
 Worm and keeps afloat the most unfit,
 Notwithstanding Spencer, vies with Karma
 And theosophy which saints commit ;
 Stark materialists who fool and flounder
 On the surface they proclaim the deep,
 Tilt with gray Mahatmas and old Rounders
 That through many lives and ages sweep ;
 Scandal-scraping, to but pleasure loyal
 Lower yet, and lower yet they fall,
 While in crown of cards the Figure Royal
 Beams benevolently down on all.

I am pleased my carrion flies are sporting
 In the splendour of the night their day,
 Killing time and characters and courting
 Dear divorces the adulterous way ;
 Though a virtuous Queen, whose every motion
 Is as proper as Lord Burleigh's nod,
 Gives the world a pattern of devotion
 To her Mausoleum and her God ;
 Still upon the precipice they flutter
 While they ravish each new opening bud,
 Sip their tea and eat their bread and butter
 And turn marble palaces to mud.

GONIOBOMBUKES IN THE SERVICE.

With a General, they say one only
 Skilled to turn the battle from the gate,
 Who (poor fellow) must feel rather lonely
 In sublime and solitary state

Up above the race of mice and midges,
And perhaps a little out of it and cold,
If his genius makes the best of bridges
From true steel and not the dirty gold ;
Britain now is but a third-class nation
Out at elbows and unarmed and rent,
Though she trades on the old reputation,
With the spirit of her heroes spent.

One first line she has and that too hollow
And with much weak rubbish in its ranks,
But no seasoned second line to follow
And fill up in war the bloody blanks ;
Boys no doubt with all the best intention,
Boys by hundreds wavering at the front,
Not the stuff for strife's stern intervention
Or to be baptised in fiery font ;
Like a palace faced with many a column,
And a vestibule of marble wrought
Strong and stately, and with sphinxes solemn
Leading through great pillars unto nought.

Starved recruits that clamour for compulsion
As they dribble in by puny drops,
While the proper lads in proud revulsion
Stick to business and protect the shops ;
Wretched weeds that hardly know their A B,
Never meant with iron Mars to rub,
Who should stay at home and nurse the baby
Or assist their mothers at the tub ;
Such are Britain's props and mean material,
Dregs and refuse of the cheapest lives,
To uphold a Majesty Imperial
And defend the honour of her wives.

War officials wanted for the pillory
Who grow rich upon their country's shame,
Overpaid for arms and grand artillery
Which exist as nothing but a name ;

Guns that burst at every serious trial
And a danger only are to friends,
Bayonets that break with no denial
And bring soldiers to untimely ends
Cavalry superb but without horses,
Leaders brave to rashness if so few,
But engaged in cards or their divorces
Or at home with some obliging Jew.

Yet the money flows away like water,
To maintain tradition and red tape
And the gang of clerks who at each quarter
Have to lick expenses into shape ;
Millions' waste, to pay contractors' prices,
Claims of families in hungry hordes,
Or accommodate expensive vices,
Mouldy chiefs and military boards ;
And disdaining not theatric scenery
Through disaster in its sure descent
Groans and grumbles on the huge machinery,
The most costly and most impotent.

Ships abound that dare not leave the harbour,
Admiralties quickly come and go
And regard the claims of ball and barber
More than any rocks or threatening foe ;
Architects unmoved by that or this stress
Change their minds and models every week,
As a libertine discards one mistress
For another with a fairer cheek ;
Fortunes sink in blunders doomed and sterile
With each new designer's shifting bents,
And at most are (when not downright peril)
Ruinous and mad experiments.

Never was a finer fleet on paper,
Iron walls to girdle the wide globe,
Though they fade before the prying taper
Of the critic with his cruel probe ;

Never were such figures, save by Mystics
 In their endless incarnations booked,
 As those estimates of sea statistics
 By experts in office duties cooked ;
 Never was a Navy in condition
 Fitter storm or enemies to meet,
 Than that organized great imposition
 Called by courtesy the British Fleet.

Where the ships to shield the distant treasures,
 Where the stations to provide the stores,
 When they grudge the means except for pleasures
 And refuse to fence unguarded shores ?
 Party government my best production
 Is to bring the bravest country low,
 And divided aims insure destruction
 From inside without one hostile blow ;
 So I let them buzz with spite unsparing,
 While the Empire slowly shrivels up,
 Thanks to idiot chatter and cheese-paring
 And high place that holds the jewelled cup.

GONIOBOMBUKES IN TRADE.

High and low in every place they gamble
 In the drawing-room and on the street,
 While they scrape the mud and fight and scramble
 Just for gain if but their winding-sheet ;
 Everywhere my master lust is present
 As the root of each triumphant ill,
 From the bloated prince to the starved peasant
 Breaking open some unguarded till ;
 Everywhere the furious race for riches
 Rushes on to my determined goal,
 And the hand of priestly blessing itches
 For the savings rather than the soul.
 Royalty rides on the broker's pillion
 And obeys my mammon's jockey call
 Winning thousands, if it drops a million
 Now and then and gets a nasty fall ;

Never mind, since fools were born to losses
And a casual tumble in the mire,
If as sops to Cerberus it tosses
Crown and jewels all into the fire ;
In good time a rich and toadying nation
Which to plain folks only is a boor,
Will wipe out the spots of speculation
By another tax upon the poor.

Trade, my boys, is now the proper ticket
Which will bring you if not glory gain,
And the dirtiest platter though you lick it
Will find fouler rogues to lick again ;
Sell your dearest friend or prize, your honour
Must ere long go in the melting pan,
And your wife divine as a Madonna
Will fetch something from a business man ;
Do not spare that young and lovely daughter
Coveted by Cræsus of the mills,
Let her slide the helpless lamb to slaughter
Just to settle the most pressing bills.

Speed the lucky dollar with its spinnings
Down the vilest depths and darkest track,
And you soon will have a handsome innings,
When like curses it with more comes back ;
Keep it going, do not stick at trifles
And a stain or two upon the coat,
Should a fist grow leprous as it rifles
Orphan's purse and grips the widow's throat ;
Run religion, you may score well off it
And betray the Christ you will not miss
With good conscience and a better profit,
If like Judas you can crawl and kiss.

Great is commerce, and the man of mettle
Waiting for the fixed and fated hour,
Gets the fish for his own silver kettle,
And with money its almighty power ;

Opens every door to him, the gallows
 Cannot block his conquering march, and prayer
 Offered by the priest he purchased hallows
 Doubtful deeds and the undoubtful payer;
 Beauty shines upon his shadiest actions
 If they only swell the sweater's heap,
 And disdaining decent figleaf fractions
 Freely sells in public market cheap.

Ah, the clinking of the precious pieces
 'Tis the sweetest music of the day,
 And the sheep that carry golden fleeces
 Can be shorn at innocent high play;
 Bland promoters with their bubble dealings
 Haul in hard-won earnings, by their plots
 Too magnificent for vulgar stealings
 And the jail that lesser ruffians pots;
 And the fiend with true financing humour
 For a fall of unexpected range,
 Slays his thousands with a lying rumour
 In the shambles of the Stock Exchange.

Where is not the trail of filthy lucre
 Which defiles the hovel and the house,
 And leaves droppings in the chaste Proseucha
 That might shock the shabbiest Church mouse?
 Old and young, the halt and withered, scuffle
 For their pickings as they cast the dice,
 While they note the cards they do not shuffle
 And pay dearly for the pleasant vice;
 In that region known too well to mention
 Which to my warm place is now annexed,
 Prude and prostitute in sharp contention
 Meet and flutter shameless and unsexed.

Capital is pitted against Labour,
 As apace it greedier grows and tries
 With the clamour of its festive tabor
 To conceal the murdered victims' cries;

And my insects buzz and sport and sputter
On the carcasses they grudge their graves,
And when they have scraped the bread of butter
Fling it in the gutter for their slaves ;
While the toiler's wound unheeded rankles
And for Dives only serve the laws,
Till the Flood now rising to the ankles
Sweeps away the millionaires like straws.

GONIOBOMBUKES IN LITERATURE.

Awful engines I have framed or fractured
(As they suited) to be plagues of men,
But of all the torments manufactured
In my mill is nothing like the Pen ;
Nothing like the paying party journal
Steeped in venom and convenient lies,
With a spirit truly quite infernal
Splashing mud alike on earth and skies ;
Never in my wildest rape or revel
When I turn the brightest blossom sere,
Do I feel so proud to be the devil
As when bearing my false witness here.

Ah ! the Sword is good when by a tyrant
Held who mocks at even religion's bar,
Or by Russians and some red aspirant
Like the bloody butchers of the Tsar ;
And the Pestilence has got rare beauties
When it hardens sire against the son,
Or makes mothers drop their sacred duties
And the trust a new-born babe has won ;
And the Fire is not without some merit
When a young volcano helps its plan,
While an earthquake may a prize inherit
If stray bishops jaunt about Japan.

But the Pen is still my stoutest minion,
If it bids the tenant pay no rent,
Or as firebrand tosses an opinion
Which will set in flames a continent ;
Doubtless with the neat and flashing needle
I have damned in thousands ready fools,
And this evermore will work and wheedle
Idle minds to be mere harlot tools ;
But my first and favourite production
To perform the most amount of ill,
And my instrument of chief destruction
Is and always was the goose's quill.

Yes, I make it spit away and sputter
At whatever gracious is and good,
With its message of the grave or gutter
And a hate of Christ and maidenhood ;
Who would not in some cheap lay or libel
Tear aside the veil from holy charms,
And while trampling on the truth or Bible
Hug a naked error in his arms ?
Who has not condemned great institutions
In the maudlin trash that aids me well,
And contrived by the best resolutions
To put down some proper bricks in hell ?

Journalists who write for Party Papers
May be bought in market any hour,
By proprietors who like hot capers
With their mutton lest it should go sour ;
Men who are not over-strong in reason
And in grammar have but little part,
Yet know well the nicest way to season
Scum of scandal for the lecherous heart ;
Prompt to stab a foe behind and ruin
Virtue if upon the other bench,
And to strangle like a Tartar Bruin
Life from every rival work or wench.

Fun not food, not service but sensation,
Smartness at the cost of dirty hands,
Barefaced folly if an innovation,
Such are what the British Ass demands ;
Photographs of lion and of leper
Mixed with fairy tales from Foreign Courts,
And (provided they abound in pepper)
Nasty pickings from police reports ;
Froth of open drains and filthy flotage
Wafted by ill winds that are my whips,
All the babble of the anecdotage
Hiccoughed over wine by senile lips.

Now the Gospel of the British Nation,
Is the journal with the smallest truth
And the very largest circulation—
A lewd blear-eyed Boaz without Ruth ;
For the Board-schools, that without contention
Form the masterpiece of modern art
And my latest and supreme invention,
For the Bible take the Paper's part ;
And the children like a sauce sensational
To wash Drawing and Pianos down,
And I must be undenominational,
Though I like improper news and noun.

Progress downward would lack sweet variety,
With no faded grandeur of fine airs,
And no mean Press organs of Society
Dishing up the tattle of backstairs ;
And the sty of *absinthe* and French novels
In their nude and naughty stage undress,
Is the temple in which Fashion grovels
Still more low the louder to confess ;
While in this my own especial corner
I the puppets work that pose as men,
As they follow me the arch suborner
And keep buzzing with their devilled pen.

EPILOGUE.

(Diabolus loquitur.)

Yet stay, dear friends, and with the kind assistance
Of cultivated *plasma*, misnamed men,
I hope to prove I have no true existence
Outside the sputterings of weak prate and pen.
How can I live, when Science pleads her parable
And leaves no room for the old Devil's dance,
And turns the classic groves to spaces arable
With loud display of learnèd ignorance?
Evil is but the accident of matter
And motion in their rhythmic ebb and flow,
But not my work, as theologians chatter,
Who dub each mystery a Satanic show.
As evolution in its pomp and progress
Speeds onward, plucking jewels out of mire,
All this will vanish with the fallen ogress,
The brimstone terrors and the fabled fire.
My being is but the devout confusion
Of gaunt divines like Calvin, Knox, and Laud,
Who palmed upon you this grotesque delusion
And thanked their God for such a pious fraud.
I have no person and no real identity,
As Huxley sees and his Agnostic crew,
Who deem my name at Gadara a nonentity,
And steal those swine from the discrownèd Jew.
At most I am a useful party fiction,
To stop a gaping corner in a creed,
To figure at an advertised eviction
As the promoter of some statesman's need.
I'm but a phantom, rising from the crucible
Of educated matter, known as mind,
By quantitative methods now reducible
To vapourings of idle words and wind.
So do not fear me if some sacred oracle
Insists upon the mischief I have wrought,

Remember I am only metaphorical,
A mere convenience for the shifts of thought ;
A turn of speech, a symbol of negation
Or all the naughty things you love so well,
But not the spirit of a damned damnation
With its exploded dreams of woes and hell.
I am a Bogey, if you find a niche in
Your temple still for ghosts at best but gas,
To scare bad children and to keep the kitchen
In due submission to the upper class ;
To frighten fools and spectacled old spinsters
Who harry pretty maidens over tea,
And point a text for pulpiteers in minsters
To splash their superstition's dear dead sea.
So treat me gently, since to hate religious
I am sweet fuel that is never cold,
And give the human heart its love litigious
Which is a treasure better far than gold.
And as her shadow I can freely enter
The proudest Church at which rude stones are cast,
Though history says I was the first Dissenter,
And lying still I shall outlive the last.

SECTION IX.

HERBARIUM.

BEN TILLET.

Every dunghill has its cock
Every bullet has its billet,
Every Session has its block,
Every squabble has its Tillet.

THE OLD JUDAS AND THE NEW.

Old Judas sold his Master for just thirty
Blood bits of money—dead men *do* tell tales !
Our Judas sells his Lord for the same dirty
Sum of unhallowed votes from Godless Wales.

LADY BURTON *LOQUITUR.*

If he be there, then all is spoken ;
It may be Heaven, it may be hell ;
I simply wait the pilgrim's token—
“ *The tinkling of his camel's bell*”.

NED.

Ranting, raving, roaring Ned,
Throwing stones when we want bread,
Mixed with every muddy pie,
Never never told a lie,
Never never did a thing
Worth the least remembering,
Foremost with his prurient pen,
And the very last of men.

THE TWO ASSES.

A Parson climbed up to a steeple,
With prayers and bitter pain,
And preached long sermons to the people,
But always preached in vain.
An Ass passed by, no Ass of Hermon,
Smirched with the miry street,
And brayed a short and lusty sermon—
The people called it sweet.

HOW WE CONFESS NOW.

I had a sin I would confess,
My own and not another's,
And worse no mortal could transgress;
So I confessed my brother's.

AN EPITAPH.

Here lies a nameless Rector. Who was he?
A man who struck at all things bad and rotten,
And hurt himself, and only asks to be
Forgotten.

THE WAY IN INDIA.

England, home of beef and beauty
 And that statesman—all know who,
 Hopes each man will do his duty
And his blessèd neighbour's too.

MRS. BESANT.

Really, really, Annie Besant,
 Things are getting d—d unpleasant
 And beyond a jest,
 With your wonderful gyrations
 And those endless incarnations;
 Let poor devils rest.

THE LAST EMPEROR OF BRAZIL.

Once Don Pedro in his Tub
 Splashed, and merrily did rub
 His uncommon clay;
 None might break on his ablutions;
 So he (deaf to revolutions)
 Washed his crown away.

CHERRY-STONE POETRY.

Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit.

Erst our Bards, of cameo gems
 Shaping deathless diadems,
 Sat on kingly thrones;
 Now on dung heaps, in the mire,
 Much they toil and more perspire,
 Carving cherry stones.

AT THE FUNERAL.

Irish patriots have their Sexton,
Undertaker's office plies
Gladstone, ready for the next stone
And the Empire's obsequies.

THE GLADSTONE BAG.

Gladstone tumbles in his Bag
Each impossible bad measure,
Silk of duchess, beggar's rag,
Jams and justices at pleasure,
Hangman's rope and England's flag,
Irish prisons' choicest treasure,
Shuffles them with baits and brag,
And denies them all at leisure.

TRAVELLERS' TALES.

Writers now of Lap and Hindoo,
Bogus lands and champagne seas,
Seen as through a Hansom window,
Lie devoutly at their ease.

THE NEW GOLDEN AGE.

Young Liberty its tide rolled proudly on,
It gilt the strongest tower and every steeple ;
But as we hailed the blessing it was gone,
And left instead a Despot in the People.

IRISH MAGGOTS.

Traitors are ye, food for faggots,
Wallowing in native slime,
Bred (as out of offal maggots)
In corruption of the time.

IRELAND'S GRATITUDE.

Give her Home Rule, Rome Rule and the pleasures
Flowing from that muddy fount ;
She accepts them, money, and all treasures,
Gratefully but "on account".

THE GLADSTONEBURY THORN.

Flowers at Christmas the old famous Thorn,
And new coats get Hodge and Bruin ;
Gladstone also then renews his morn,
And the flower is England's ruin.

RUB-A-DUB-DUB.

Gladstone with his Irish one idea
Takes the Empire for a patent scrub,
Pops it in the bath like old Medea,
Then away throws Empire with the Tub.

HYPERPNEUMATISM.

Sanctus loves the soul and not the body,
And with only one will keep his troth ;
I think Father Sanctus is a noddy,
And believe in both.

WOMAN V. WOMAN.

Set a thief to catch a brother thief,
Both alike are very human ;
And, would you a sister bring to grief,
Let a woman catch a woman.

A MODERN HERO.

A hero, if not one who walks in white
Or keeps the Queen's dominions ;
A hero still, who has the courage quite
Of other men's opinions.

A LOST JEW.

I met a weeping Jew, and said, " Can I
Console you with a simple proved prescription ? "
" 'Tis vain," he sobbed ; " let luckless Moses die,
Who has not spoiled to-day one d—d Egyptian."

VERY ORIGINAL.

O he was an original man,
Not of course in mere simian kin,
Nor in breadth of his stomach or plan ;
It was only " original sin."

THE OLD SCHOOL AND THE NEW.

Of old our seekers, with no vain commotion,
Bottomed the deeps where Truth is known to dwell ;
Now, though they splash and muddy all the ocean,
They only bring up some poor paltry shell.

THE MODERN FREEDOM.

Freedom fought for, sought for, came in time,
Mainly for the Upper Classes ;
Then it chose a sort of taproom chime,
And migrated to the Masses ;
Now, devoid of reason and of rhyme,
'Tis the Sovereignty of Asses.

WORSE THAN DEATH.

To die in life's sweet summer time were sad,
With joy in every breath ;
To die and suffer Gladstone's praise, would add
Another sting to death.

BURIED ALIVE.

They buried a man—a man alive,
For forty days, with his ass's ears ;
But, believe me, I who yet survive,
Have been buried alive for forty years.

PLEASURES OF THE SEASIDE.

A thousand nurses, niggers and their noise,
Ten thousand children paddling, ducked or wailing,
And martyrs going through their ghastly joys
Of sickness, brandy, soda, and blackmailing.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

A Premier cutting his country's throat
And the country giving the knife,
While the carpenter mends the tailor's coat
And is paid with the tailor's wife.

LIFE.

Life is so short, a promise broken ;
An unreach'd port, a love not spoken.
Life is so vain, a pinch of pleasure ;
A gilded chain, an empty measure.
Life is so small, dark eyes and lashes ;
The prompter's call, a heap of ashes.
Life is so dim, a glimpse of morning ;
The ocean's brim, a tomb's adorning.
Life is a breath, a fading meadow ;
The mask of death, a shining shadow.

THE CURLEW'S CRY.

Ah, often when in flesh I fain would rest,
I hear it like the curlew's cry—
The call to lure me from earth's sordid nest,
To my true home Eternity.

SONGS OF THE TIMES.

A mistress for her jewels chosen,
Outlandish words, a figleaf shirt,
Rant of infinities and hosen,
A little blasphemy and dirt.

WRITING IN STAYS.

With pretty nymphs I oft have dallied,
Who love constricted ways ;
But far more wasp-like, pinched and pallid,
The man who writes in stays.

HOW TO WRITE.

If you would write and be a man of mettle,
Then choose a term from the most lying creed,
As loud and empty as an old tin kettle,
And (if you lose your soul) you *may* succeed.

THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

If one might hazard what is not a witticism,
But just an effort to explain a plan,
Then I should say the stuff called Higher Criticism
Is one more proof of the "Descent" of Man.

INCONSISTENCY A VIRTUE.

Did I *hear* Gladstone sticking to one honest text
For one short hour on time's poor little stage,
Then I would stake my hope of mercy in the next,
On this—that he *had* turned another page.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.

Just take a phrase the cheapest and most hollow
And light it at your neighbour's fireside flames,
If you would make your brother asses follow
And set ablaze (when well insured) the Thames.

OUR NEW SCHOOLMASTERS.

The child is father of the man, they say ;
My boy does really rule ;
He makes me work and has himself all play
And keeps me still at school.

WRITTEN IN DUST.

If you would yield the Master trust,
 Then play the servant's part;
 He wrote His judgment in the dust,
 His mercy on the heart.

LORD ROSEBERY.

Lord Rosebery his race began too well,
 And swallowed like a man his Gladstone poker;
 But from his clever conjuring soon he fell,
 And finished as a third-rate table joker.

ITEMS.

Gladstone swears that black is white—
 Evil good and justice hollow,
 Then his front reverses quite;
 And his Items humbly follow.

ANDREW SHORT.

The burden of much writing; men turn stale;
 And dulcet Short grows maundering and long,
 Who mumbles yet the thrice-repeated tale,
 And drones again the too familiar song.

AN EPITAPH.

God will not have a wretch who cannot sing,
 And has no virtue—not the faintest particle,
 Who would pluck feathers from an angel's wing,
 Or fire all heaven with some perfervid article.
 Hell will not have a fool so proper grown
 Above one vice's frank redeeming level,
 Who was a member of the "Devil's Own,"
 And yet denied the existence of the Devil.

G. O. M.

A sceptred slave who wears a tinsel crown
He throws his country's honour to the Beast,
And in the coming deluge lest he drown
Clings to the cassock of the Irish Priest.

THE EMPEROR OF ASIA.

Tired of the trombone and the narrow North
And his stale stupid carpentering caper,
The Tsar in mushroom majesty steps forth
An Emperor of continents—on paper.

MRS. STAFFORD.

Her face, on which bright visions play,
Seems to have plucked its joy from sorrow,
With all the sweetness of to-day
And all the promise of to-morrow.

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS.

Start a stupid crabbed Church Paper,
Serving up old falsehoods fresh;
Wipe your nose upon the scraper
Of the pretty painted Flesh.

IT IS WRITTEN.

Write out service fair in trust,
Nor offer Christ a part;
He wrote His judgment in the dust,
His mercy on the heart.

A CORRUPT PASSAGE.

Two scholars who had deeply learnt and supt
Sat beaten by a crabbèd text of Aristotle,
Pronounced the passage hopelessly corrupt
And made another "passage" to the bottle.

LORD GOOSEBERRY.

There was a thin statesman called Rosebery
Quite at home in his Foreign Affairs ;
But the French made him little Lord Gooseberry,
And now his duped nation despairs.

BANGKOK AND H.M.S. "PALLAS".

Shall our brave sailors scuttle for a pinch,
At the thrice-beaten French cock's crowing ?
Stout Richard Grenville had not budged an inch,
If all the winds of hell were blowing.
Civilians guide our ships, who basely cringe
And lower the Flag to please a faction ;
O for an hour of England's old "Revenge,"
When true men cleared the deck for action !

THE SIAMESE TWINS.

Lord Rosebery a statesman might have been,
Had no big bidder come to try him ;
But, ah ! he sold his country and his Queen ;
And now for sixpence who would buy him ?
So he and Gladstone, quite a pretty pair,
As sweet as Hector and King Priam,
Will stick together in our showman's care
And be the immortal Twins of Siam.

EPIMETHEUS.

I would not learn, though in prophetic tones
 I heard the message of the years,
 And saw the legend of the still white stones
 Read in a lurid mist of tears.
 Though suffering came with its grim iron whip,
 And trouble with its tempest wind ;
 Like the stern lights of some great passing ship,
 They only threw a blaze *behind*.

T. HUXLEY.

I asked Tom Huxley about God and Fate,
 Creation's puzzle and Free-Will's acrostic ;
 He said : " Your present and your future state
 To me are blank, I am a d——d *Agnostic* ".
 But might he not have urged with equal sense,
 And thereby made his folly just as famous,
 " Who cares for Souls and Goals or Providence ?
 Thank God, I am a blooming *Ignoramus* ".

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT.

I.

Some call it Keble, some say crafty Newman
 Put all his wicked will in her ;
 But it began with really nothing human,
 And ended at the milliner.

2.

Let's give to Newman what we can,
 His genius fair and flighty,
 He was at best an erring man
 And not a God Almighty.

3.

The Oxford Movement rose, to call
 To prayers a godless nation ;
 And yet its postures are not *all*
 The purpose of creation.

4.

The Oxford Movement came to men,
 With views and vestments flowing ;
 But now it nothing moves, and when
 The devil is it going ?

A PRAYER.

O Fortune, give me what thou wilt,
 A curse, sweet Maude's caressing,
 The critic's dagger to the hilt,
 But not—not Gladstone's blessing.

A GAME AT MARBLES.

The playful little Jemmy Knowles,
 Who nothing weakly garbles,
 Would have his little game of bowls
 With the dear Elgin Marbles ;
 Despising ancient use and form,
 He braved the Comtist garrison,
 And heedless of the avenging storm
 Was flooded by Frederic Harrison.

LOVE.

The highest water-mark of human tide,
 The fountain of virginity,
 That gives to earth its sweetest power and pride,
 And gathers of infinity ;
 That makes alone of Heaven its measure wide,
 And is God's own Divinity.

CONSCIENCE AND GOD.

Whigs may have conscience—at a pinch,
 That makes them sometimes doubt;
 But Tories, though they fret and flinch,
 Have never more than *gout*.

LORD ROSEBERY AND MR. STRANGE.

It was not at a marriage,
 Lord Rosebery's carriage,
 But in fulness of plenipotentiary airs,
 Committed that blunder—
 And sent a man under,
 Because he was "Strange"—in his Foreign Affairs.

ST. WILLIAM.

The old St. Patrick loved and did his level
 Best, when he made the Fiend and Reptiles pack;
 Our new St. William now has raised the Devil
 (He cannot lay) and brought the Reptiles back.

AN ADDER.

I found a fallen wretch half-starved and cold;
 I fed him, raised him up, and was his ladder;
 But, when he felt the summit in his hold,
 He kicked me down and turned into an Adder.

UGANDA.

O why, impervious to the sling of slander
 Do you, great England, still play fast and loose
 With those who trust your faith in far Uganda,
 When at your feet the treasure lies, *you Goose?*

THE "HOUSE".

When from the Commons manners fly
 And noise displaces *noûs*,
 And Members live on charity,
 'Twill be indeed the "House".

ST. MATHEW.

St. *Matthew* gave us, by Divine *commission*,
 Salvation's Gospel with no legal flaw;
 The modern *Mathew* only gives perdition
 And nothing knows of Gospel or of Law.

UGANDA.

Rome, when of old the weary watch was loose,
 And spent and beaten slept her brave commander,
 Owed *safety* to your cackling, O *you Goose*!
 Shall we *lose honour* by you, O *Uganda*?

BLOOD AND IRON.

What has made our England fair and great?
 Law, our charters, Bible, or sweet Siren?
 Wooden walls or thin red line like Fate;
 All were worthless without *blood and iron*.

A REAL STATESMAN.

Strong in his great and single love for truth,
 An iron ruler and a subject still,
 The head of reverend age, the heart of youth—
 To mould the murmur of the people's will.

A MODERN HOME SECRETARY.

A cussed thin thing, with one leg
 Of law which he but hobbles on ;
 One thought and *that* a rotten egg—
 That he's the last Phenomenon.

YOUNG WILLIAM.

Hail to thee, O theatrical Figure,
 In thine awfully various rig,
 Who art half of thee Æthiop nigger,
 And half of thee glorified prig.

MORLEY'S FOOD FOR ASSES.

Cattle wisely go to Thorley
 For the food he sells,
 Asses only get from Morley
 Mean and empty shells.

A SECOND-CLASS MAN.

John Morley took a second class—
 But hardly got a niche in,
 He borrowed bluster from the ass,
 His manners from the kitchen.
 He called the honoured House of Peers
 A mere "dead weight of passion,"
 "Unmoved by aught but *force* and fears
 And simply fools of fashion".
 But then a noble youth went by,
 Who had a stick for giving ;
 He made the dust and falsehood fly,
 And showed one Lord was living.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A KITTEN.

I have had my little share of loves,
 I have purred and played the kitten,
 And ruined many lives and gloves,
 Have bit and then been bitten.

A LIVING WAGE.

What is a "living wage" for working cheer?
 Go, ask the drunken miner;
 Silk dresses, salmon, four days' labour, beer,
 Pianos, bull-dogs, china.

A MODERN BEAUTY.

Here's your modern beauty—
 All things done, but duty;
 Pretty, but not proper;
 Dear, sir, at a copper.

TO MRS. (OR MISS) JULIA WEDGWOOD
(ON HER "BIBLE IN THE BIBLE").

No thanks, madam, for your labours
 Stolen from your richer neighbours;
 Better any sort of libel,
 Than your last amended Bible.

THE PLEASURES OF HELL.

A POPULAR VIEW OF PROFESSOR ST. GEORGE MIVART'S
"HAPPINESS IN HELL".

If, when you are old and cappy,
 Lady Belle,
 You would once more be quite happy,
 Go to Hell.

Mivart says there are no treasures
 And no revels,
 Full of such exceeding pleasures
 As the Devil's.

Pæna sensûs seems a blister,
 And no toy ;
Pæna damni is, my sister,
 Perfect joy.
 Hell will prove (O shade of Leighton !)
 But bad Latin,
 And the fiery throne of Satan
 Will be *sat in*.

Blessings on the learned Roman
 Knight St. George,
 Who despite the Fiend as foeman
 Steals his forge ;
 And for every sot and Siren,
 Child of Adam,
 Wreathes with flowers the red-hot iron,
 Frisky madam.

AN EVIL ODOUR.

When someone nameless went to h—ll—
 Mind ! *I* was there and know it well
 And all exactly that befell,
 And stick to every word I tell,
 As truly as my dinner-bell—
 He carried with him such a smell,
 An evil odour
 Of brandy and soda,
 He drove the Devil out of h—ll.

JUDAS, M.P.

Judas, journalist and traitor
Would for sixpence sell the Crown,
With the manners of a waiter
And the morals of a clown.

R. L. STEVENSON.

He gives as heroes only blackguards
And never drew a lady,
His lights outrider Rider Haggard's,
His shades are very shady.

ALGIE.

Who can say much for his October,
Or Algie sunk?
And I appeal from Algie sober
To Algie drunk.

THE NEW FELLOW.

O there was a young Fellow of Trinity,
Who supposed that his rooms were Infinity;
So he told his Mamma
He would order a Star
To be ready and in his vicinity;
For he wanted to study Divinity,
And might travel afar
In that luminous car
With the aid of its lamp and Latinity,
Ere he hit on the proper affinity;

And he thought his Papa
 Might just light a cigar
 Now and then at his glory in Trinity,
 Which was yet in its blooming virginity.
 But a black sheep cried "Baa"
 And extinguished his Star,
 And then butted him out of Infinity
 With all his preposterous ninnity.

MAD DOGS.

A mad dog is a mad dog the world over,
 And has no earthly right;
 The Anarchist is just the same mad rover,
 And should be shot at sight.

TO A. B. C.

Alas, for Cambridge, when its foremost college
 Returns once more to A. B. C.,
 And thinks to slake its human thirst for knowledge
 With frying-pan and fricassee;
 When the great wisdom she was once so rich in
 Subsides to Mother Beeton's books,
 And is replenished from the greasy kitchen
 Which serves for Fellows now its "Cooks".

A ROAMER.

Our dear old Gladstone's birth-place was a *roamer*
 And could not find a stage whereon to stand,
 He had as many lives as cats and Homer
 And was born, too, out of his native land.

HOME RULE.

What is this shambling endless Home Rule botheration?
 Sham veto, sham finance, sham safeguards' chain,
 A sham supremacy on a shamrock foundation,
 "Meershams," and all washed down with sham champagne.

A PROPHECY.

The day the British Empire died,
 A party sacrifice to Pat,
 Great Gladstone from the Commons fled
 With flying locks and hands outspread ;
 And though he'd lost an Empire, cried—
 Posterity, I've lost my *hat* !

HOW NOT TO DO IT.

We starve our patriots and toast
 The traitors with full glasses,
 Leave helpless arsenal and coast
 And feast our dangerous classes.

TO M. DUPUY, PRESIDENT.

“Gentlemen, the Sitting is continued. It would not be to the dignity of France or the Republic, that such attempts (dynamite) should disturb your deliberations.”

Hail to thee, noble President,
 Who didst so bravely stand
 A shock that shook a Continent,
 But not thy guiding hand !
 Because thou barest on thy heart
 A brightness without brand,
 That greatness of which thou art part—
 The Honour of thy land.

URBI—ORBI.

Mother of many peoples, on thy brow
 Are writ the awful destinies of Time,
 In love and war and unimagined crime
 And hate that never would forget its vow ;

When pomp of cities passed thine did not bow,
 But spread its empire more through every clime
 In every breast that owned a sway sublime,
 Dethroned, but in thy ruins greatest now.

Heart of the storied world, still rolling on
 Eternal music from each tower and dome,
 To saint and seer and king alike a home;
 With all thy wonders but the glory gone,
 Bright with a light that on no other shone,
 Death is thy footstool, Universal Rome.

HOW TO BE A POPULAR POET.

Dress *à la* Byron, not too often sober,
 A sceptic of the school of Taine,
 A breezy pagan saddened by October,
 With the street morals of Verlaine.

MODERN POLITICS.

Let principle and honour both go hang,
 While party triumph like a carrion vulture
 Feathers the rogue who has the sharpest fang,
 And preys on empire, fame, and every culture.

A MASTER OF BALLIOL.

There was an Aristotle; there is Jowett;
 Each Master, I and he;
 Whatever has been taught, I know it—
 And all that is to be.

TO THE S. P. C. K.

The Lord Chief Justice spoke, and truly gave
 The law of Christ's own college :—
 The wisdom of the knife may gild the grave,
 But is not "Christian Knowledge".

A QUACK PHYSICIAN.

O Labby, you have but one song,
 And the same dreary text,
That England must be always wrong—
What next?

Agreed, *that you are always right*
 And wisest of all men,
 And we dull sinners in d——d plight—
What then?

And now that you have blackened all,
 Though not of venom reft,
 And really can no lower fall—
What's left?

If England tried your quack receipt
 And traded at your store,
 Your penance would be quite complete—
What more?

THE MAKER AND THE BREAKER.

Bismarck, who made an Empire, plants his trees,
 And never served himself but served the Crown ;
 Gladstone, who his own end in all things sees
 And serves himself, cuts trees and Empire down.

"THE DAILY PAPER."

Thank God, in spite of Boards and Model schools
 And "armed Science" with its taper,
 There are not yet one hundred thousand fools,
 To start bold Stead's mad "Daily Paper".

THE COUNT LYOF TOLSTOI.

Count Tolstoi, here's a nut for thee—
 If two and one are only three,
 It stands to reason four is treason;
 Then why, if evil, resist the Devil?
 But two to one, you are not right;
 And so, Count Tolstoi, now good night.

EXIT GLADSTONE (MARCH, 1894).

Gladstone his exit makes like the old Law,
 And drops his sceptre with a curse;
 Some devils (only *rending*) will withdraw;
 But no one is a rap the worse.

DENYING THE MASTER.

Peter denied his Master with an oath,
 But melted soon in tears
 And bowed to sorrow's sentence;
 Gladstone denied his Master and his troth
 And cursed the House of Peers,
 And howls for *their* repentance.

THE NATION'S VERDICT.

"Old Man," exclaims a tired long-suffering nation,
 "Mine was the *patience* and you sore did vex it,
 But yours at last the tardy *resignation*,
 And for your finest act your final exit."

SENTENCE ON GLADSTONE.

This be the sentence, Gladstone, to retrieve
 Thy errors wrought by sheer age:—
 All thy remaining life, without reprieve,
Hard labour in the Peerage.

VERMICIDE POWDER.

Take a boot of solid leather,
Iron-tipt and tried and true,
And apply it quick and smart
To his tender nameless part
With a cuff or two together,
Till your Vermin's black and blue.

A PRESCRIPTION.

Grip your Vermin by the throat,
And with penal boot and hand
Deeper than the thickest coat
Print indelibly your brand.

TO ARMCHAIR CRITICS.

Critics, who are always biting,
Always queer and always queasy,
Say my writing *reads too easy*,
But I know it's *d——d hard writing*.

THE CROWNED ASS.

To the mighty Sovereign People,
Lord of tower and lord of steeple,
Lord of every City shelf
And of all except Itself,—
To the Crownèd Ass,
I most reverently kneeling
With a touch of fellow-feeling
Hold this looking-glass ;

Wherein all Its hopes and fears,
With Its triumphs and Its tears,
And the yearning of the years,
Through Its long amazing ears,
 As the shadows pass.
To that once Imperial scion,
Once the proper British Lion
 Of the ruling Class,
Now by treason's vulgar wiles
And our precious Burns and Byles
 Run to mangey Mass ;
To the Beast in its Sirbonian
Bog, like Neb the Babylonian
 King, reduced, alas !
Shabby scabby flabby thin
Donkey in a lion skin,
 Eating dust and grass !

EPILOGUE.

To thee, my delicate sweet Wenda,
 Rosebud and rue,
These closing words not half so tender
 As thou and true.
Thine is the nameless secret glamour
 I cannot spell
 Who know it well,
A hush amid the sordid clamour
 Where passions dwell,
 Ineffable,
A grace unknown to mortal grammar
 Which angels tell.

For thou, my happy winsome Wenda,
 Rosebud and rue,
Robed in the afterglow of splendour
 Beyond this blue,

Art well-nigh all compact of Heaven
And white as snow
On Arctic floe,
Without a thought of lower leaven
Or fleshly throe
To make a foe,
And only to the earth hast given
One dainty toe.

Yes, thou, my radiant golden Wenda,
Rosebud and rue,
Hast yet a thorn to be defender
Of others' due—
And yet a sharpness, that is pleasant
To bosoms wild
And still defil'd ;
To thee the timid fawn or pheasant
Are ever mild,
By thee beguil'd,
And from thy hand take pat or present,
O spirit child.

I cannot teach thee, my pure Wenda,
Rosebud and rue,
A line or lesson that is tender
As thou and true.
Thou art incarnate joy, and glory
From larger skies
Those laughing eyes
Haunts with their unforgotten story ;
And in them lies
A love that flies
From sages, who with learning hoary
Are otherwise.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

THIRD EDITION

"The New York Times, in its issue of Tuesday, March 15, 1910, contains a long and interesting article on the subject of the 'New York Times' and its influence on the public mind. The article is written by a well-known journalist and is a valuable contribution to the history of the newspaper. It discusses the various factors which have contributed to the success of the 'New York Times' and its position as one of the most influential newspapers in the world. The article is well written and is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of the newspaper or the influence of the press on public opinion."

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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THIRD EDITION.

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"'*Women must Weep*,' by Prof. F. H. Williams, is a collection of verses written with a truly noble purpose—the advocacy of the cause of the poor and neglected, especially the women and children in our city streets. Apart from this, the verse is at times of a high order, as in '*The White Cross*,' '*On the Threshold*,' '*Baby Innocents*,' and '*Nobody's Child*.'"—*Graphic*.

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"Thank you heartily for 'Women must Weep.' I will not lay it aside, but will keep it on my table, and turn to it for help and inspiration."—*Bishop of Sodor and Man*.

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